

COURSELETTE *and* OTHER POEMS

by JAMES HAROLD MANNING, B.A.



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REST LIGHT, you green and hal-
lowed sward,
Upon this servant of the Lord,—
This “gentil knight” of sword and song
Who came our way and passed along.

*The stars of Art and Science lent
Beams for his soul’s habiliment;
And Learning, with clear-shining torch,
Led him within her temple porch.*

*Sweet be the memory of his name,
Fair written in his country’s fame,
May his untroubled spirit dwell
With the brave truth he loved so well!*

CRAVEN LANGSTROTH BETTS.

New York City.

1855



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Fly Leaf Poem



If I were ruler of this land, with
majesty complete,
If I owned all these many leagues,
and not a yard beside,
I'd give them up without a sigh
for room to place my feet
By the fog banks and the rain
and the sound of Fundy's tide.

THE AUTHOR

Maturin, Venezuela,
October, 1924



B I O G R A P H I C A L

JAMES HAROLD MANNING was born at Saint John, N. B., on February 15th, 1897, the second son of Dr. James and Helen (Hanington) Manning. He was educated at the Saint John Public Schools, and graduated from the High School in 1912, at the early age of fifteen years. On graduating he took the City Corporation Gold Medal for general proficiency, and the Ellis Gold Medal for the English Essay.

During 1913 and 1914 he was employed with the Engineers of the Public Works Department of Canada in the harbor of Saint John. In 1914 he decided to take up the study of Dentistry, and went to Philadelphia, where he entered the University of Pennsylvania. It was during that year that the Great War broke out in Europe. On the completion of a successful Freshman year in 1915, and being eighteen years of age, he returned to Saint John and obtained a commission as Lieutenant in the 104th Battalion, C.E.F., then being raised by Lieutenant-Colonel George W. Fowler. Subsequently he was transferred to the 140th Battalion, training with them at Valcartier Camp in 1916, and going to England on a Special Supernumerary Draft of Officers. This draft was at once sent to Crowborough Military School, where he was placed in the advanced Field Officer's Course, making in the final examinations the fine average of 92.60 on all subjects (a most unusual performance). Having been posted in G. O. as Lieutenant with the 52nd Battalion, C.E.F. (Port Arthur), he crossed to France in February, 1917. This fine corps saw much severe fighting during the

war and had especially heavy losses. It was decimated at Paschendaele but attained its objective.

It was during the battle of Vimy Ridge that he was wounded in the arm by a shell, and was invalided home to England for three months. On recovery he rejoined his corps, the 52nd, at Lens during the fierce fighting that raged without intermission amongst the coal mines and slag heaps of that disputed territory.

On August 27th, 1917, while he was carrying out a minor operation between the lines for the capture of three German machine guns, an error in elevation was made by the British Artillery, nine miles in the rear. Unfortunately their barrage was laid down where he and his detachment were waiting, which was promptly added to by the enemy. Wires were cut by gun fire and word could not be sent to the guns to increase their range. Manning was completely buried by the explosion of a big shell but was dug out again by his sergeant. Collecting with difficulty some seven or eight men he rushed the machine guns, from which the Germans fled, and brought them into the Canadian lines—winning success out of disaster. It was at the very close of this affair that a whiz-bang burst close behind him, throwing him violently to the ground, and shattering his left hand. This terminated his military service. Lieutenant-Colonel Forster, of the 52nd (now Major General Forster, V.C.), writing of him at that time, said “He is a born leader of men ”

After a long period in hospital in England he was invalided home to Canada, where an attempt was made to save his hand by grafting in new tissue, but without success, and he was finally discharged from active service with a life pension in 1918.

Owing to the loss of the use of his left hand he was obliged to abandon his degree in Dentistry, and entered Acadia University at Wolfville, Nova Scotia, for an Arts Course. Receiving credit for college work already done, he was able to register as a Junior, and in the one year

completed sufficient units of work to qualify for graduation, receiving the degree of B. A. with high average. Even this hard work did not prevent his finding time to act as Editor of the *Acadia Athaneum* during that busy year.

And right here an important decision had to be made, for he was at the parting of the ways. As a scholar he was exceptionally brilliant, and like his elder brother, Frederick C. Manning of the 85th, who was killed at the battle of Vimy Ridge, he was equally at home in scientific, engineering, or literary work. He had also a great love for music, together with a tenor voice of exceptional quality, and in addition a very fine discriminating taste for Art. The paintings of the old masters enthralled him. After due consideration he decided to take up the study of Town-planning and Landscape-gardening, and in 1919 entered Harvard University as an undergraduate. With characteristic energy he obtained an appointment on the Town-planning staff of Boston, working at that task each afternoon during his college year, although this again necessitated studying late into the night. On the completion of his term he went to Chicago, entering the offices of Edward H. Bennett, C.E., an expert who was in charge of the Town-planning Department for that city.

However, the war had left its effect of upheaval and restlessness upon him as upon others. Then, too, there seemed to be always present in his mind the idea of gathering new experiences amid new scenes—materials for that future work in literature that he always contemplated. So, after working there for one year, he left Chicago in 1922 for New York City to work on the draughting staff of the Electric Bond and Share Company, in whose offices were one hundred and twenty skilled designers.

In 1922, while thus employed, he accepted a position on the Engineering Staff of the Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey, for service in Venezuela, South America. His first post was in the head office at Maracaibo, being transferred afterwards

to Maturin in the spring of 1924, where he died on October 27th, 1924, in the 27th year of his age. He had contracted a malignant type of malarial fever, which, after three months, resulted in cerebral hemorrhage. His immediate superior on the staff of the Standard Oil Co.—Mr. Acton Gerlach—wrote: “ * * * * * For the past six months he had been located in the Maturin district as a member of our engineering staff, and we had all come to know him and to be fond of him; to admire the fine traits of his character and to respect the admirable qualities of his mind. It was a pleasure to all of us to be associated with one who so well embodied those ideals of thought and conduct that are the heritage of gentlemen * * * * * ”

It will be easily seen from the foregoing that his life had been one of condensed concentrated effort—as if he somehow felt that his span of life was to be all too short and that he must hasten. His studies commonly carried him far into the night, yet did he find time to do a vast amount of reading and writing. During his twenty-seven years he went farther afield than most men of sixty. At the time of his landing in France to join the 52nd he spoke and wrote both French and German fluently. To these were added Latin, Greek, Italian, Spanish and Russian. But although a brilliant linguist his especial aptitude was in the field of English literature. His prose was dignified and graceful, the words being most aptly chosen; but poetry was his own special delight. His note books, letters, envelopes and memorandum books were all full of casual verse and stanzas that haunted him until he had jotted them down. Finally he gave himself in earnest to the writing of poetry, and in what spare time he had, managed to produce quite a considerable amount of verse. It is primarily to place these verses before the world as a contribution to Canadian literature and as an appreciation of an eager young spirit that has passed on, that this little book makes its debut.

JAMES MANNING



COURCELETTE AND OTHER POEMS

INVOCATION TO THE MUSE.

Goddess with eyes afire and marble lips,
Kneeling so careless by thy treasure-pile
Veiled in thy hair; thy pensive forehead bowed
Low on thy knees; the memory of a smile
Trembling upon thy cheek; thy finger-tips
Dimpling thy pearly chin; silent and proud:
What art thou, form divine? Where livest thou?
Hast thou untroubled streams, as poets feign,
Clear fountains, sunny meads unstained by snow?
Or art thou but a vapour of the brain:
A beauteous mist that rises from the plain
In heat of summer fancy, and is caught
And tangled in the silken web of thought?

Be what thou wilt; yet in my dreaming-time
Too well I see thee, for thou kneel'st aloof
And car'st not for the woven wreathes I bring,
The off'ring of my true love and its proof;
Nor wilt thou raise thy head to heed my rhyme,
Nor wilt thou lift thy finger for my ring.
I cannot blame thee, for my words are wild;
It may be thou dost know me not for thine;
Thou art not to this new world reconciled
That scorns the gladness of thy sober wine.
Yet take not their indifference for a sign
That all thy worshippers have left the faith:
Thy altars shall endure, in spite of death.

Our little glories and ambitions pass
Twined with the rolling years, but in the heart
 Blooms love eternal, and undimmed desire
To comprehend the wisdom of thine art
And read the secrets of thy mirrored glass,—
 Waiting thy breath to kindle into fire.
Forsake thy simple fields, and brooks that purled
 To empty air; from peak and lonely strand
Descend and sing to an awakened world
 Familiar notes that all may understand.
Our hearts again shall move to thy command,
Shall cease their straining after gods unknown,
And humbly pledge allegiance at thy throne.

COURCELETTE.

"Courcelette, stormed by the 2nd Canadian Division in September, 1916, was today retaken by the enemy."

OFFICIAL REPORT, June, 1918.

Now twice the winter's rain and snow
Have swept across the muddy plain;
Still these gaunt bones lie stretched below
In drifting snow and pelting rain.
Two winters since that autumn sun
Dim on my closing eyelids shone,
One breath beyond our parapet
At Courcelette, at Courcelette.

Beneath the tread of kindred feet
In beds prepared by kindred hands
Secure our souls might slumber sweet
And dream of home in foreign lands;
But now the trumpets of our foes
Profane the calm of our repose;
With kindred blood the earth is wet,
But aliens speak in Courcelette.

O ye, our kin, are we to lie
Forever under hostile tread?
Or will the land that saw us die
So faithless doom her faithful dead?
Ye may live on in sloth and ease,
And with our anguish buy your peace,
But none of worth can so forget
The tears and blood of Courcelette.

Our pledge of sacrifice to Heaven
Ye too must humbly undertake;
The vows that in our hearts were given
No less are yours for our deaths' sake;
We have redeemed our heavy score
In fiercest agony of war;
Ye cannot claim to pay your debt
The holy soil of Courcelette.

Ye cannot drink the bitter wine
And break the bread of Courcelette
Whose hearts were never made divine
In agony and bloody sweat;
Never in licence and disunion
Can ye partake of that Communion
Until your souls be firmly set,
Each one to storm his Courcelette.

Ye too, in fortune or in pain
Must lift once more your heavy Cross,
For 'tis the striving, not the gain,
That marks the final gain or loss:
Must ever tread the weary road
That leads through suffering to God;
Though once thrown down, rise steadfast yet.
And storm another Courcelette.

Wherever lawless might is free
To trample on the souls of men
There in the cause of Liberty
Our battle must be fought again;
Our spirits have outworn the clay:
Yours bear the burden of the day;
Your struggle is not ended yet:
There is no rest in Courcelette.

As in a vision I can see
 Beyond the tumults of the war
A humbler nation, yet more free,
 Treading the path we trod before;
Forgetting fear and greed and vice,
 Soaring on wings of sacrifice
To heights where sun can never set
 In an eternal Courcelette.

And we who lie beneath the plain
 With wider vision now can see
A larger purpose; nor complain
 To pay the price of Victory.
Great Judge, in whose just balance gain
Is only to be earned in pain,
 Chasten us too—lest we forget—
O Courcelette! Our Courcelette!

WOUNDED BETWEEN THE LINES.

Deep night under the stars
And I lie on the frozen sod
With my faint soul beating her prison bars
To soar to the throne of God.

Twinkling splinters of light
So high in the empty air
Shine in my eyes through the silent night
To draw my spirit to prayer.

Above the tumult of sound
That sank with the setting sun
The angel of silence has spread around
Her blessed oblivion.

Sweet peace reigns over all;
Even the fiery pain
Is numbed, and darkness shrouds like a pall
The tortured forms of the slain.

And in my heart such peace
Falls like the night, to bless;
And hatred, vengeance and passion cease,
To move me to bitterness.

All the horror of war
Grows faint and dim to my ear,
And, dying, thins to a murmuring far
Like a voice from a distant sphere.

This passing shadow of strife,
That blots the sun in pain,
Seems but along the surface of life
To move and be lost again.

And clear to my opened mind,
Embracing friend and foe,
The anguished heart of all humankind
Reveals one common woe.

And a Voice said: "How shall thy soul
Complain of My ultimate plan?
Of what account on that infinite Scroll
Are the joys and sorrows of man?

"Neither in pity or rage
My purpose moves on apace;
I read not the individual page;
I fashion the soul of the race.

"All things to one great law
Revolve their destined span,
And joy and pain are the clay and
To build the temple of man." straw

Yet, like this night, may peace
Fall on the world again,
And win for all nations the same release
From passions that torture men!

By day enough woes await,
Sorrow and tears to spare,
Though all false pride and envious hate
Were vanished into air.

If we from the tomb forgive
The hand that destroyed our youth,
Is it nothing to you that move and live
In the light of a newer truth?

Purge out the shameful stain!
By the grief of all that is done
Let the memory of us who die in pain
Light the dawn of a brighter sun!

Vimy, April 9th, 1917.

ANSWER TO FLANDERS FIELDS.

Sleep ye in peace on Flanders plain!
Your righteous cause through tears and pain
Has triumphed, for the nations all
Have shaken off the tyrant's thrall
And peaceful now doth Freedom reign.
For from those crimson flowers a stain
Of fresher crimson spreads amain,
And wakened peoples hear the call
From Flanders Fields.

Fear not, ye have not died in vain!
Your flickering Torch burns bright again.
A million hands, whate'er befall,
Are pledged to hold it lest it fall,
In memory proud that ye lie slain
In Flanders Fields.

MARCHING SONG.

Chant:—

Merry boys and true boys, marchin' on to Essen,
Hear the bugles shiver and quiver as we come;
Twenty thousand merry boys to give the Dutch a lesson,
With Charlie at the cymbals an' Johnny at the drum.

Keep the pace amovin', Sergeant, while the bugle's playin';
Come along, come along, double on the right;
Never mind the windows; there ain't no use delayin'
Till we've got to Essen an' enjoyed our little fight.

Chant:—Merry boys, etc.

Aw, I don't mind the fightin'—I'll fight until I'm blind,
But this damned marchin' is aparchin' of us dry;
An' the dust's all right for you in front, but hell for us be-
hind;
What's the hurry—we should worry if we're not the first
to die.

Chant:—Merry boys, etc.

Aw get out and hug yer carves: we'll leave you where yer
layin';
See the ranks aliftin', don't it feel just fine?
Nothin' sounds nicer than to hear the bugles playin'
With twenty little buglers all ablowin in a line.

Chant:—Merry boys, etc.

DUTY.

The way was close and forest-bound
And swallowed up in shadowy gloom
That half concealed the rocky ground
Where glimmered many a hasty tomb.
Lo, as I journeyyed on that way,
I came on One with eyes aflame
From empty sockets, and a frame
Unclothed with flesh, who bade me stay.
And voices deep within me cried:
“Turn—turn thy footsteps from the path—”
“Go back, go back to light and love—”
But Duty whispered from above:
“My service calls for higher pride:”
“Learn of these others who have died.”
“Greater than this love no man hath.”

Le Treport, France, 1917.

RESURGAM.

Fill up with hope the measure of the year;
 Winter is near.
Weave snow-white blossoms in thy clinging hair,
 Thou maiden fair!
Time cannot rob the season of its bloom,
Though still the spindle flutters in the loom,
 And when the web is wove,
There is an end of hope and youth and love.

What then? Earth hath her season of decay—
 Clay unto clay:
And life begins its fuller blossoming
 In heavenly Spring!
So from the ashes of our dusty pyre
There doth ascend that flame of sacred fire,
 That nothing can destroy,
To glow upon the altar-steps of joy.

Etaples, France, 1917.

ODE TO NATURE.

Vague dreams that fear the healthy light of day,
Sighing regrets, and discontents that throng,
If in your close procession aught more real
Moves than distortion of a visual ray,
Inspire my tired thought, from you that long
Has drawn its substance, and vain woes dispell.
For in my musing walks the fields among,
Watching the slumbering shadows in the trees,
The last wing-flutter of the dying light,
All sound of men discordant to its peace
Disturbs the tenor of the even-song,
And what their hands have wrought offends my sight.

Not as a recluse on the toiling way,
Scorning the axe or plough, whereby we wring
Reluctant earnings from the barren heath,
I from my kind divide, but glad as they
In all that brings ease to our laboring.
Yet prisoned in these gloomy shades of death,
Towers of dead clay, gaunt piles of shattered stone,
Dead ribs of metal, sundered blocks of wood,
Cities where crowded populations throng
In tainted air and artificial sun,
I mourn that greater heritage of good,
Free Nature's light and stars—laughter and song.

O for the careless bliss of early days,
When to the simple happy eyes of men
Unfettered rivers sparkled to the sea,
The very air enchanted; when their gaze
Explored with awe the sky's blue mystery,
And with each golden dawn hope shone again;

In the world's childhood, when with wondering eyes
Men looked on beauty and beheld it fair,
And sought not further, but with easy faith
Found Nature's changes every joy and care,
Her will their inspiration, e'er the wise
Had plucked the knowledge of the tree of death!

O strengthen us, sustain us, make us see
No less than those, our fathers, who in fear
And reverence beheld thee, and conformed
Their acting to thy studied harmony,
And thereby won to beauty, that our ear
Hears that same music, that our frames are warmed
By unchanged sunlight, and no less than they,
We breed and die. O rule our hearts that we,
Beneath the shadow of thy guarding wing,
Heirs of the ages' quest, perceive in thee
A bounteous sovereign, not a slave, and bring
Our open hearts, like theirs to know thy way.

For us as for our fathers, bountiful;
Compassionate thou art, and pitiful.
Life feeds on life, and wrestling millions writhe
In mortal strife to share a meagre yield
That will not feed the weakest, while the scythe
Of the fell reaper thins the harvest-field,
And hot with hate the flames of battle burn,
With mothers' tears, and speechless agony
Of strong men fettered to a hopeless cause,
And rebel hearts of older ancestry,
Too bound by precedent to sound the stern
Discordance of the elemental laws.

Such storms of life assail our hope and peace,
But saving strength of wisdom is denied,
Vain competition breeding vain desire,

Ending in hate, despair or cruel pride,
Our broken hearts, our wounded hopes require
Some healing oil: upon them pour thy grace!
Bend down, and let us feel thy guarding wing
Above us, as our fathers long ago,
And to our souls reveal thy mysteries
Entire, as now in part, until we know
All Nature moves in every living thing,
And beauty her unveiling to our eyes.

And yet again returning penitent
By chastened art and high prophetic rhyme,
Will not a mellowing world old hopes renew,
Won to that earlier creed through discontent?
Or do I dream, an age beyond my time,
Sworn in the dying faith wherein I grew,
Still unrepenting and in error proud?
For whom I see throned in eternal awe
Controlls the circling stars, from fiery hands
Flings blinding shafts of light, in wave and cloud
Majestic moves, and subject to her law
Inspires the clay to carry her commands.

But speak I not in wildness of the fate
That to thy will these sovereign powers gave,
While overhead the obedient skies vibrate
To the electric whisper they diffuse,
And while the endless immemorial wave
Is tracked by creamy foam of racing screws
On accurate meridians, and the blast
Whose shrieking made our fathers tremble, high
Clutching the wet shrouds on the quivering mast
Scarce bid the watching mother hold her child
Closer, while fast through the resistant spray
The roaring engines beat in tumult wild.

This is the master passion of our breed,
To search the mysteries of natural law,
And bind them down in rules of two and three
To do the bidding of our petty need.

O Mother Nature, though thy powers that draw
The pulsing tides of the eternal sea,
From the equator to the poles, assume
No mystery to our curious gaze, may we
By comprehension rule them? Though secure
We ride on their performance, hold in fee
All generative life, what are we more
Than atoms creeping between birth and tomb?

Let every whisper in the wind-blown trees,
The storm-proof flower delicately lined,
The sinuous curve of ripples on the sand,
And snow-white wind-clouds bellying to the breeze
Teach us thy way of beauty! May the grand
Harmonious cadence of the ocean wind,
The liquid call of mating birds, the play
Of gullied waterfalls, the majesty
Of the reverberating thunder-peal
Show us to blend our noisy industry
With beauty, and that old delight to feel
As humble scholars treading Nature's way.

To such obedience and wise happiness
Lead us rebuked, and give us all such youth
As the immortals have; not in disdain,
Nor scorning laws whose limitations bless
Ev'n in restraining, but content again
Through simpler joys to comprehend thy truth.
Thy peace enfolds me, in the placid haze
Of mellow twilight, while the glory fades
That rimmed the west with splendor: softly strays
From far the noise of streams, and on the hill
A window lightens, while the gathering shades
Blot out the tree tops, and the leaves are still.

ODE TO THE SPIRIT OF LIFE.

I.

Beautiful Spirit of Life,
Sweet essence of music and air,
Thou knowest my soul is thy slave;
Oh, melt to the flame of my prayer.

By the love that I bear for thee
I pray thee my words to inspire,
And lay on my parted lips
A coal from thine altar-fire!

II.

For as I woke to-day
With the peeping of the sun
The clouds were rolled away;
And, though dawn had scarce begun,
Rosy glimmerings of light,
Bright as never yet were seen,
Trembling glances of delight,
Seemed to quiver, dance and play
Through the vibrant air, and run
O'er the wet enamelled green.

While the trees that gently sway
Close beside my window ledge
On the sudden waking gay
Rustled to a newer pledge
Of some inner happiness.
What it was I scarce could guess;
Till a gladness born of day,
Laughing all my cares away,
Thrilled me like a fond caress.

For fairy-like the springing morn
In fuller harmony was born,
 Charming my spirit into song;
And instant as the swallow's dart
A golden vision pierced my heart
 Of Life and Beauty ever young.

III.

Oh, for one magic moment
 She whom my heart of fire
Flames to possess forever
 Bent to my wild desire.

Lighter than infant's fingers,
 Keener than frosty wine,
Sweeter than dew that lingers,
 Rested her lips on mine.

I have gazed in the star-filled heavens
 Till my eyes were lost in the deep;
I have pondered the sliding waters
 Where the secrets of ages sleep;

But deeper far than the skies,
 Cloud-filmed in the vastness of night,
Lay the pools in thy dreaming eyes
 In the flash of my sudden sight;

Nor deep the mysterious spell
 That broods on the slow, black stream,
To the love beyond power to tell
 That woke at thy earliest beam.

Then with pity, fair Spirit of Life,
From thy heaven of music and air,
Breathe into the soul of thy slave,
And return at the flame of my prayer!

IV.

For the whole earth was alive!
A conscious world of breathing things
That murmured like a crowded hive,
With dancing light and flashing wings.
For air and sky and field and sea
Were filled and eloquent with thee!
The twigs and leaves to merry elves
With joyous grace transformed themselves;
And tremulous-sweet the breeze went by,
Rippling a morning melody
To greet the flowers that raised anew
Their brimming cups of living dew.

Even the clods of wholesome earth
Swelled with a conscious power of birth,
And spread a shimmer in the air,
Wooing thy foot to linger there.
I saw thee sporting in the trees;
I smelt thy perfume on the breeze;
Thou kissed the green turf everywhere;
While myriad in rainbow-sheen,
Radiant from the bounteous sun,
Universal mysteries
Filled and thrilled the marvellous scene.
Flushed with the rapture of thy glance
The scintillating sunbeams dance
Through the eager air, and run
Over the enamelled green.

V.

I turned my gaze within the room,
Sensing the secret of its gloom,
Then raised my eyes in sudden fear;
For I saw a tree once strong and tall
Deformed and hewn on my chamber wall,
And like a corpse it did appear;
Slain in the flower of its youth,
Robbed of the power of its growth,
By cruel metal wrenched and torn
Into a strange unnatural form
Of fixed decay and life outworn,
To shield my frailness from the storm;
My cupboard filled with flesh and blood
Butchered to furnish me with food;
Over my limbs a web of fur,
Woven by skill of restless brains
With artificial heat to stir
The sluggish pulsing of my veins;
And fibres torn from th' living plant
A weave of tissues made to flaunt
Their broken ruin, once green and fresh,
False, to adorn my living flesh.

There is no life about me,—none;
Where'er we tread, our ruthless foot
Shatters the smoothness of the stone,
Or scars the seedling's tender root.
Yet would we fain disguise the harm
And keep the death-chilled body warm,
Like the dead beauty of a flower
That blooms in water for an hour;
Though it seem fair, and all men say
It has not lost its former grace,
I who have seen thee face to face
Must turn my pitying eyes away.

We are content to live alone
 'Mid the destruction of our hand;
We tear and split the living stone
 Melting in countless years from sand;
Wasted to sand by ceaseless storms,
 Flattened to ribs of living ore,
 And welded by thy sleepless power
Into a thousand changing forms.
So its essential quality
Is fixed by thy necessity,
 While the apparent shape and hue
 On which our eyes are all intent
 Is but the chisel's accident.
And this we hammer to our will,
 To imitate to human view
 The living form in which it grew.
Even with boast and clamoring shrill,
 In impious audacity
 Imagine we have conquered thee,
Bold to believe half-seeing eyes,
 And dazzled by our own disguise.

There is no life about me,—none,
 All that has life we seek to slay;
And though with knowledge dearly won
 We save the bodies from decay
And greatly build with earth and stone,
 An hour of thy majestic day
 Will level all our towers of clay,
However deep our fingers grope.
Yet glows there not a spark of hope?
 Divine, thou smilest, and a gleam
 Dispells my sorrow like a dream.
The price of our supremacy
 Is thus to live in midst of death;

And though we yield unwillingly,
 And ever toil with eager faith
To paint the tomb with living hue,
Yet in the end thou claim'st thy due,
 To prove thy final sovereignty,
And wakest the dead to life anew.

Supreme, against thy mighty charms
We are but children, and our arms
 Have strings for sinews! Thou dost take
The trampled stone, and to the ground
 Restore it, where thy powers awake
And pour new life into the wound,
 And lo! a growth of living green
Where only Death before was seen.
Thy vigour fills the fallen tree,
 And spite of human care, by stealth
Doth rot it, and thy secret power
 Is but delayed a careless hour,
 And what we slay wins back to health
Through lowest form of energy.

Then, though we live and move in death,
 Oh, save from death my hope and youth!
And sovereign keep my inner faith
 A firm republic of thy truth!
These mortal eyes have seen thy face,
 And never from my altered heart
 Can thy fair memory depart
In any change of time or place.
 Oh, goddess, yet, if thou be just,
 Forgive a creature formed of dust!
If thought be some diviner ray
Beyond the stirring of the clay
 I know not, but my yearnings cling
 Bound to this earthly covering;

Whate'er of wondrous and obscure
Await my feet on that dim shore,
 Pity the weakness of my sense;
 Send my reluctant soul not hence
Ere I have seen thy face once more!

All-gracious Spirit, I rejoice
 That I am weak and thou art strong;
For though my heedless foot destroys
 Thy patient care repairs the wrong;
What I tear down, thy powers restore
 As fresh and beauteous as before,
And from thy loving, fond caress
 Blossoms a newer loveliness.
For thou dost hold thy sceptre high
 Above our little rivalry,
 And with a motion of thy wing
 Erase our mischievous pencilling.

Then blameless love for all things living
 Dwell within me and around me,
Make me patient and forgiving
 To the sorrows that surround me;
In my weakness I am blest;
 Let me on thy bosom rest!
Though at my touch life seems to wither,
Child-like I do but work thy will,
 And thou dost piece the parts together
Soon as my troubling hands are still.
 To disobey thy high behest
I have no power for good or ill;
 For me, to hope and love is best;
I trust thee; let my heart be still!

AT THE TURNING OF THE TIDE.

At the turning of the tide,

When the pale night wind comes trembling to the sea,
The Power that flung the striving waters wide
Calls in my heart to them and me.

My heart that felt the flood of the returning,

Drawn on the thronging water-main,
The source and light and haven of its yearning
Among the reefs of pain.

Then oh, my soul, from out thy folden prison,

Wherein thy patient longings burn,
See where the orb of thy release has risen,
And bids the restless mighty tide return.

Great Power, to that current I confide

My bark, from all misgivings free;
Oh draw me with the ebbing of the tide
Home into the vastness of the sea!

THE STORMY PETREL.

Up the slope and over the crest
I fly like a feather of spray,
So gay,
And light is my airy breast.
I hover about where the dolphins play,
And splash in the foam and startle away
With a flick of the wings, while colors sheen
In a gorgeous veil of dazzling hues,
Crimson and yellow and emerald green
And blues.

Oh, what can compare with this delight,
To float on the crest of a wave
And breathe in the wonderful misty light
When the lip curls over and breaks into foam,
A fountain of green, frothed over with white;
And up again on the wing to shave
The toppling verge of another surge;
This is pure ecstasy; this is my home!

All day long with laughing and song
In a dance with the rainbow I wander along,
I race with the sunbeams and whirl with the breeze;
And when the red sun
Dips down on the seas
With the swell of a billow to serve as a pillow
I can sleep till the day is begun:
Are there joys that can rival these?

SONG TO A MERMAID.

More white than milk-white foam
Thou dost breathe the sparkling air
At the gates of thy ocean home,
Smoothing thy tresses fair;
And the cool waters play
In the tangle of thy hair,
Sporting the hours away.

But let the hoary swell
Torment the tumbled sand;
Come thou to me, and tell
That I may understand
Of what serene delight
The sea-nymphs on the strand
Ply in their chorus bright.

Here on the too rough lea
There are flowers thy brow to twine,
And the birds clear minstrelsey
Will mingle notes with thine;
With dew and honey to eat
And love in the warm sunshine,
Thy wave will not be so sweet.

JILTING.

Let lovers raise
Their credulous lays
 And of happy love go a-lilting;
But, a single man
I'll tipple the can,
 And sing in praise of Jilting

For which is better, misguided knave,
 To be the slave of folly,—
To be but folly's slave,
 Or wander free and jolly
At your own sweet will and leave?
 Fool! to be melancholy!

Poor moths! What shame
To seek the flame
 Where freedom and wings are wilting;
More glory to thee
Who settest us free
 Spite of ourselves, fair Jilting!

For which is better, misguided knave,
 To be the slave of folly,—
To be but folly's slave,
 Or wander free and jolly
At your own sweet will and leave?
 Fool! to be melancholy!

If once she loose
The gilded noose,
 Wonder not if she meant it;
O question not
Your happy lot,
 But flee ere she repent it!

For which is better, misguided knave,
To be the slave of folly,—
To be but folly's slave,
Or wander free and jolly
At your own sweet will and leave?
Fool! to be melancholy!

REVOLT.

I have chained my soul to the gloomy crag
Where the God endured the stake and fang;
Set watch on my heart, and forbad my tongue
The eager flood of its happy song,
That in the morning tide it sang,
All for the love of the mumbling hag,
Propriety!

What more can you ask of me, hideous crone?
Can you hope to trick me a longer while?
I'll turn from the charms of your withered face
And say farewell to the commonplace.
At your angry threats I can only smile,
For I'll burst my fetters and be my own
Proprietor!

LYRIC.

Linger still in my heart
Love, like a sweet refrain
Whispered softly over and over,
Rising and falling and dying again;
Thrilling with exquisite art
The brimming soul of thy lover.

Drowning all thought of earth,
Thou art so heavenly pure;
Heavenly sweet and heavenly fair,
Tender and simple and soft and demure
How can I think of thy worth,
Dearest one, save with a prayer?

So to the end, my sweet,
Be thou my guiding star,
Raising and guiding me ever and ever;
And all my desires are
But to lay at thy feet
The crown of all my endeavor.

SONGS FROM "ALADDIN."

I.

I do not care for dance or song,
I feel no charm in sport or play;
Like years the moments drag along;
Like ghosts the pale moons waste away.

Once I loved well such pleasures all,
And once I loved to prune the vine,
To touch the wares in the market stall,
And dream the jewelled robes were mine.

But now all joy away is gone,
For by the river ere break of day
I saw a mystic caravan
Brilliant with wreaths and colours gay.

And by the foremost camel's head
There danced divine a fairy form;
They passed, but ere away she sped
She turned, and beckoned with her arm.

The sandals from my feet I took
And sprang to follow my delight;
But like a mist, ere I could look
They all had vanished from my sight.

And I have roamed through every land
Beneath the Caliph's broad domain;
For till I find that fairy band
My bliss cannot return again.

II.

Through the blaze of the close bazaar
As I stepped at noon in the weighted air
 I heard a priest from the topmost tower,
 Intoning prayers at the holy hour,
 Cry "Bow! bow! bow!
For time is fleeting and frail art thou,
And the wing of the Bird is over us now!"

I asked a roamer from far Bagdad,
"What mean these words so strange and sad?
 Will the Searcher find us where'er we hide?"
 And from the tower the Voice replied:
"He must; He must.
For the flower shall fade and the sword shall rust,
And the hour pass, though we waste to dust."

I walked alone on the desert sand
Where the palm trees rose on either hand;
 I wound my turban about my eyes
 And dreamed that the houris in Paradise
 Sang "Sleep! sleep! sleep!
For the day is long and night is deep,
And idle it were to wake and weep!"

It matters not if life be spent
In fasting or in merriment;
 If we remember or forget
 Still the muezzin calls from the minaret
"Give ear! Give ear!
Though kings be mighty and life be dear,
All things shall wither and disappear!"

III.

Love's a feather on the fluttering wind;
Love's a toy of the fickle mind;
Love's a flower in the brief summer sun;
Love's a Jack-Lantern that gleams and is gone.

Then Love, Love, laugh while you may!
In the glow of the sunshine be merry and play!
Idle and indolent, subtle and scheming,
Touch not too near the heart; Love's but a dreaming!

Love's of the fancy, and fancy is free;
Life's but a moment; then live it in glee!
Life's but a shadow: why live it in vain?
Love's a sweet opiate to deaden the pain.

Then Love, Love, laugh while you may!
In the glow of the sunshine be merry and play!
Idle and indolent, subtle and scheming,
Touch not too near the heart; Love's but a dreaming!

Gold is but earth, but the heart is of air;
Sceptres are baubles, and weight us with care;
Sullen ambition ne'er reaches its goal:
Love's the rare jewel that gladdens the soul!

Then Love, Love, laugh while you may!
In the glow of the sunshine, make merry and play!
Idle and indolent, subtle and scheming,
Touch not too near the heart; Love's but a dreaming!

SONNETS.

I.

To DAVID LLOYD GEORGE, 1919.

Heroic chief, who to the desperate goal
Hast burst triumphant, not perchance unstained
With dust of conflict, but erect in soul,
Unmoved in war, in victory restrained;

Now in a wordy storm of charges feigned
The envious weaker few, slow to extol,
In malice quick, blind to the written scroll,
Assail the uneasy seat thy worth has gained;

Thou who, not resting, though thy crown complete,
Toiling no less, in honest wisdom planned
The broad foundations of the peace we know;
What though the jackals yelp about thy feet?
The two-edged sword is gleaming in thy hand:
Let it not swerve between the friend and foe!

II.

“NOT AS A STAR.”

Not as a star that coldly gleams apart
I love thee, kneeling on the altar stair,
Dumb in a speechless mystery of prayer:
A ray that lights but cannot warm the heart;

No white perfection, smoothed by subtlest art
For men to catch the breath at, though most fair,
Art thou, dear maiden, when I kiss thy hair,
Thy brow, thy cheek, where the quick blushes start;

Rather thy beauty, like the all-friendly sun,
Expands whereon it falls, and wakes again
Reflected white in moons of memory,
Till all the flowers of hope bloom one by one;
And like a bird that carols after rain
My heart is warmed, and sings its love for thee!

III.

“ ’TIS NOT THY LOSS, DEAR FRIEND.”

’Tis not thy loss, dear friend, that dims my eyes:
No, though the years roll slowly one by one
Into the past, and I am left alone,
Roaming the strand of barren memories;

Strong in the thought of thy firm sacrifice
I may not utter unreflecting moan,
Nor doubt the meaning of that graven stone
That guides the acting of our destinies.

Too young to die, when all experience gained,
Thy will had welded to a tempered sword
Bold to assail the embattled force of ill;
Thence there remains the fervor of thy word,
To work with patience and a steadfast will,
To whatsoever ending is ordained.

SAPPHO I.

Golden-throned, immortal, O Aphrodite,
Queen of love, contriver of wiles, I beg thee
Do not thus with raving and utter madness
 Chasten my spirit.

But in pity come to me now, if ever
Heresofore thou hast listened to my imploring,
Springing up, and come from the golden portals,
 Leaving thy dwelling,

Having yoked thy chariot; and smoothly drew thee
Swift and beauteous birds o'er the dark horizon,
Beating rapid wings in the empty airways
 Down from the heavens.

Soon indeed they reached me; but thou, Madonna,
Smiling sweet a smile of immortal glory,
Asked me why my heart was oppressed, and asked me
 Why I had called thee;

Bade me tell thee what in my burning bosom
Most I wished accomplished, "O tell me, Sappho,
Whom thou wishest Peitho to bring to love thee,
 Who has inflamed thee!"

"For though now he flee, he will soon pursue thee;
Though he scorn thy gifts, he will offer many;
Though he love thee not, he will soon adore thee,
 Will he or nil he?"

Come yet once again, and from aching sorrow
Make me free; and all that my flaming spirit
Chiefly longs for, bring it to pass, and deign to
 Stay and befriend me!

FRUSTRA.

Tell me, O masterless
Spirit of Prophecy,
What do the happy years
Promise before me?

Glorious victories—
What shall befall me?
“Palms shall not crown thee;
Thine shall be cypress!”

What fair and radiant
Maid for my wooing?
“One old as living is
Too soon shall win thee!”

Green isles and fairy lands,
Where shall my quest be?
“Regions beyond the dawn,
Whence no returning!”

Yet shall not many eyes
Weep to bewail me?
“Only one mourner—
The rain from the heavens!

“Vanished from memory,
Utterly perished,
Nameless thy burial,
Kin with the ages!”

FELLAHEEN.

Through Cairo's busiest bazaar,
As I walked at noon in the swooning air,
 I saw three men with sandalled feet
 Bear a piano through the street.
One spread his quivering shoulders wide;
Two walked unladen by his side;
 One bears the atlas-weight alone,
 The other two this song intone:

“O Allah! strong may his legs be
As shafts of polished ebony!
 Fair heaven—all thy breezes blow
 Gently to cool his fevered brow!
May he endure as Atlas did,
This gate of brass, this pyramid!
 O may his labor seem less long,
 While we encourage him with song!”

Six stalwart arms the group affords;
Two only clutch the slippery boards.
 Six sturdy legs are on the road;
 Two only stagger with the load.
Two voices raise the madrigal,
While one voice groans at interval.
 One man, bent double, sags at knee,
 But three men claim and share the fee.

Laugh ye merry Western men;
Laugh to scorn the fellahen!
 Yet remember in your glee
 Fellaheen may laugh at ye.

Know ye not of any one
In London or in Washington
Who bears a heavy weight alone,
While two beside him stand and groan?

Methinks I know of Western men
More laughable than fellahs,
To claim the fee who think not wrong,
But will not even sing the song.
You tell me this is utter rot?
Well—it may be, or it may not.
I merely rede ye when ye roam
Condemn not sins that thrive at home.

HANNIBAL.

A FRAGMENT-----

Beyond the smiling vales of Sicily
O'er smiling treacherous waves; there lies a coast
Of sun-split crag and barren yellow sand,
Fronting a land of unreaped fruitfulness
Scarce heeded by the careless traveller;
A land of vines, and palms, and fragrant limes,
Where the lone Arab wanders. Azure hills
Confine the clear horizon, sloping down
So gently that the foot knows no descent,
To where the lucent Mediterranean laves
The coast of Africa, the straggling huts
Of Tunis, and the squalor of the shore—
Oh Carthage, Carthage, that thou liest so low!—
No region once more fertile; no domain
More populous, nor people wealthier—
Pernicious wealth— that like a strangling vine
Consumed the vigor of the race that dared
Dispute with Rome the mastery of the world.

I stood with awe upon those famous shores
Seawards from Carthage, on that strip of sand
Where Scipio once with all the might of Rome
Assailed and won the well defended wall.
There rose no clangor to the ruined hills;
No shouting echoed in the listless air.
The eagle screamed; a straining windlass creaked
In the Goletta; other sound was none.
Tunis lay far across the stagnant bay.
Before me, desolation, where the hand
Of unskilled cultivation could not hide
One deep and fatal furrow ploughed with hate.

The monstrous muscling of the untiring hills,
Extended bare beneath the open sky,
Lay gnarled and tense, parched by the wasting wind.
All things bore witness to the curse of Rome.

Treading the footsteps of the kinless dead
Up that Saturnian street where Scipio
Led forty legions to assault the hill,
Chiefly I thought of Punic Hannibal,
Heroic leader of a hopeless cause;
The Carthaginian Hector, type of all
Who strive in vain against fore-doomed defeat,
And for a time bid Fate itself withdraw.
Noble his birth, of Barca's Lion-brood;
Most greatly daring of the sons of men,
Yet prudent to consider every chance;
No braggart, yet endowed with eloquence
To fire men's courage in the teeth of Fate;
Lord of himself, and by that mastery
Moving his fellows to obey and love;
Wise in the arts of stable governance;
Still gentle in the mad ordeal of loss;
Chaste in the free licentiousness of war;
Matching his code of honor to the end.
O Earth, rest lightly on this withered dust!
Not many men of all who come to thee
With years well spent or ill, bring such a crown
Of strong endurance, or a greater need
For thy last merciful forgetfulness!
But not forgotten, Hannibal, nor yet
Thy Carthage, though she merited thee not,
While still live some who count deserving more
Than to have won

MIRAGE.

There's a green land ahead,
But I don't know the way,
And my feet are like lead,

And I take no delight
In the road that I tread
From morning till night

Through the heat of the day,
And there's no one in sight
Who travels my way.

If I once found a spot
With a clear running stream
Where the sun wasn't hot

But the leaves all agleam,
I'd be glad, like as not,
To abandon the dream

Of a green land ahead;
For I don't know the way,
And my feet are like lead-----

Maturin, Ven., 1924.

RETURN.

O happy were the leagues of snowy, snowy foam
That would gleam in our wake 'neath the wind and the sky,
If I were on the sea, going home, going home,
To the land where I was born, to live or to die!

For there's but little joy in the trail that never ends,
And a weary heart is cold, for all the glories of the earth,
And all the magic seas and the wonders of the lands
Shall but lead me back to the land of my birth.

For the spruce-trees are bending beneath the shining snow,
And the straining ice is clanging along the mighty stream,
And there's a jocund welcome waiting when I go,
In the keen bright air, where the breath is white as steam.

However far I roam, my heart will still be there,
There where my treasure is, in the land of my desire;
And it's long, O it's long, till I breathe the Northern air,
And see familiar faces, around the merry fire!

Maturin, Venezuela, 1924.

NUMA POMPILIUS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN OF GOLDWIN SMITH.

Scarce had the race of Romulus survived
Its earliest wars, and laid with fated hand
The corner-stones of empire, when the sire,
Snatched to the stars, untimely left his sons,
And hung translated in the vault of heaven.

As yet their hearts felt not the common tie,
Ancestral soil, not yet old sanctity
Endeared their homes, nor knew they holy bonds
Of law. A turbulent multitude, they sought
On Palatine a refuge, from the scourge
Of Heaven fleeing, and disrupted all
Their former ties, while terror drove them forth,
The Furies born of evil deeds, and want,
To seek new fortune, and in better soil
To sink their root more surely.

To the head
Of such an empire, whom will valor call?
What king these turbulent hearts endure? To whom
Will public choice assign that loosened sway?
What later Romulus will intervene
To guide the city, founded, and to wield
The spear of Romulus in the heat of war?

By name scarce known within a narrow clan
Afar by chance he tilled a barren ridge
Of Sabine land, but in contentment, he,
Pompilius; whom no labored Grecian art,
No mystic words of Samos' sage, made wise,
But living courage and a mind that drew
Its strength from suffering, and affirmed his right
To rule.

Nay, quiet-eyed, the Muses smiled
Upon his birth, and spoke him dedicate
Their servant. Still a boy, the solemn calm
Among the hills, the gloomy forest-deeps,
The varied mantle of the changing year,
Told more to him than to the common mind;
And through the holy night those spheres sublime
Spoke near to him, watching their steady fires.

The people round oft sought with their disputes
His sentences, and from his honored door
Flowed law and justice. Nor was his renown
Unknown among the race of Romulus
Afar, and stirred them to a quick resolve.

Therefore, by secret paths, men chosen to speak
Came to his place, whom he beneath the shade
Of his one tree received, and spoke unurged
Thus sadly: "Waste no words why ye are come.
Your wish is known to me, nor I refuse
To obey the warning of the gods. O, yet,
If Fate to my delight had bade me lead
This frugal life, or to my prayers could yield,
Content with little, I had rather loved
This pleasant vale, these rivers; so in peace
I had been happy. But the gods decree
Another fate. Their summons bids me leave
Repose. A long farewell, thrice happy woods,
And shoreless silence, and untroubled sleep!"

He spoke, and speaking turned his moistened eyes,
And swept in one last look his well-known world.
Afar Lucretilis huddled his peaks
Together in the blue, and steep on steep
The rising crags hung with their gloomy pines.
Here his white dwelling smiles among the leaves;
The tiny garden, where its lord of old
Most joyed to labor, and the apple-trees
In the low sloping orchard. With a sigh

And rising tears, he turns his steps away.

Now, setting on his path, the wasted fields
He sees with smoking ruin testify
War's recent fury, and the walls of Rome
Brooding above the desolated land,
Arise, and weapons gleam about the plain.
But pouring out beyond the gates, the crowd
With din of clashing bronze, receive him in,
And, Heaven's will confirmed by certain sign,
With outcries hail him king. Raised on their shields
They bear him to his maple throne. But he,
Above the unnumbered faces, rises up
With ready dignity. His soothing words
Inspire in them a quiet long unknown.
So, when unprisoned storm-winds thunder loud

At set of sun, and heavy clouds withdraw
Their ponderous folds, shines through the gentle beam
Of Hesperus. The shepherd from the steep
Of some high mountain sees him, and is touched
With a mysterious quickening of the heart.

Under a feeble rule robbers of late
Were common grown. His wisdom and the awe
Of good example holds, subdues their will.
War's temple gates are closed and silent; all
The wearied nations lay aside their arms,
And form a league desired of all. The hearts
Of all are knit by common love of peace
In unaccustomed gentleness. They crown
Pompilius king with willing crown, and drink
Words from his lips as oracles divine.

He bids divide the fields by measure fixed;
With fertile vines and olives clothes the hills;
Instructs them in the care of herds, and arts
Of husbandry. All Nature's face is changed.
Amid the age-long homes of savage beasts,
Where in the thick and direful shades but now

The thief and brigand lurked, sun-sprinkled crops
Spring from the soil, while in the thorny waste
Smooth pastures smile, and the vine-covered hills
Are white with cottages. The common bonds
Of ordered life ensue, and spotless faith,
And innocence of blameless days. The force
Of civil power holds turbulence in awe.
Impartial laws curb with avenging hand
Unbridled passion. Hymen lifts his torch
To hallow love, and on the sacred hearth
Meet household gods begin authority.

Lo! On the yellow fields at happy eve,
The rivers and the glittering roofs that throng
The city, how the many-colored rays
Flash to and fro and shed their gleam upon
The trembling forest. From the placid land
A joyous murmur fills the air. The flocks
Move slowly home from pasturing, and crop
The tender blades, while with the plough upturned
The tired ox leaves the furrow, and afar
Smoke curls from chimney-tops. On every side
Wealth of the fields, and blameless face of Peace.

Pompilius saw the change, and holy joy
Made his heart swell, while in his new-found cares
The happy omen made his step more firm.
Far in the green recesses of a vale
A cave lay hidden, which the arbutus twined
Had overspread with shade of woven boughs,
Cooled with the wet moss of a glassy pool,
Aegeria's home; who, though a goddess, won
His mortal love, and answering had returned
No less a flame. Here, when the depths of sleep
Held far and wide all living creatures, came
Pompilius in secret, and consumed
In speech with her the night. The inner truth
Wrapped in the cloudy mystery of things

She showed him; by what law the rolling year
Prolongs itself; what heavenly essence feeds
The substance of the spheres: and this fair world
In its blest harmony. The nature then
She taught him of the gods, and what their life:
How some possess the mighty air, and some
The lands, and some the realms of Acheron;
And how to pay each shrine its honors due.

He to his people all her bidding sings,
Orders such ceremonies, and decrees
The season meet for festivals. The King
Of Heaven first, and Mars, and Romulus,
Chief patrons of the Roman Capitol,
He reverences. In procession pass
The white-veiled Flamens, and from holy shrines
Pour laurel-crowned slow troops of worshippers.
No less the priests of Mars with song and dance
A glittering throng throughout the city shake
Their shields. Now by thy quiet altar-side,
O Vesta, virgins tend thy modest flame.
Now shrines are raised, unsullied Faith, to thee,
And on them sacrificial cakes are laid.

No bulls from our Clitumnian pastures now
Are led, nor longer altars stained with blood;
No golden goblets gleam, nor lofty halls
Resplendent shine with Indian ivory,
Nor clouds of Nabathaean incense rise;
But flowers that Nature doth unurged bestow,
With berries from the heath in bramble cups,
Are sacrifice enough. The worshipper
Dares not in senseless stone create the forms
Of gods in mortal shape, nor offer them
Unworthy worship. He, Pompilius,
The mountains flushed with the young light of dawn,
Comes early, and from earthen cups outpours
Libations to the gods, and suffers none,

When night draws on, to seek his home, till all
Have thronged the sacred door, and crowned the day
With prayer and song. The country has its own
Peculiar deities. With Spring's return
Yearly the flowery altar is adorned
Of Terminus; and when the barns are filled
With gathered harvest, and the trodden grape
Foams with its purple clusters, Lord of Joy,
Thee, Bacchus, all the country-side adores
With gracious Ceres, and their banquets spread
Beneath the branching elm. The jocund cups
Exalt their hearts. With flowers they haste to bind
Their loosened hair, and beat with joyous foot
The earth in chorus, till the pallid moon
Rises above the tree-tops, and thick shades
Fill the long hills.

Nay, far beyond the bars
Of cold and hideous Death, and the domain
Of shadowy fearful night, whence none return,
The sick soul now beholds another home,
The sweet fields of the silent ones of Death,
In fellowship that knows nor care nor grief.
And broken hearts found solace in the rites
Of sad farewell, and thrice invoked the shade
Of the beloved dead, nor longer held
That nought survived the glowing ashes.

Here

Shone the first light among the shades of Death;
There is a God; not without law does Fate
Unveil her mysteries, and unguided flow.
In heaven is fixed reward for virtue; there
Late punishment for sin, where girt with clouds
And darkness, the Avenger hurls his bolt,
And frights the guilty heart with crimsoned hand.
Nor idly as of yore, the joyous earth
Offers her fostering bosom, but excites

No reverence for her store among her sons.
A wider wisdom fills her beauteous form,
And living grace pervades it.

Soon their zeal

Matures in added charm. Religion claims
Their first attempts in art, while nobler hopes
Flame in the hearts of all, and future years
Are present care. Among the myrtle groves
White-pillared rise fair temples to the gods,
Doomed to survive their sons and children's sons,
And marble feigns with ornate capital
Acanthus leaves. Some draw from tuneful strings
A varied strain, or hymn in uncouth verse
Their fathers' wars, heroic deeds, and love.
A youthful vigor gaily flushes all
Their happy venturing, and eager hope
Breathes life and health within them. So the child,
Unknowing, on the flowery portal of new life
Beginning, now is happy. Glowing suns
Ever for him bring new delights; the earth
Is ever green; ever the air gleams gold;
No longer sparkling eyes are dimmed with tears,
Nor hardening age veils Nature's face in shade.

Pompilius shows the path, with heedful care
For heavenly guidance; greets their first essays
With friendly interest, kindling their hearts
By words of hope and kindness. Yet by stealth
Often he flees the press and din of rule,
Revisiting the haunts of former days;
And now, on the high mountains roving, drinks
Ambrosial draughts of purer air: surveys
All mortal things with godlike mind serene,
And joys to see the shores of heaven draw near.
Now on the living turf reclined he lies
Far in a secret vale, where leafy halls
Are sheltered from the flaming sun. A stream

Slides devious by her bedded banks, and breaks
In gleaming eddies. Nor ('tis said) alone
He wanders there; through deepest reverence
To step profane that hallowed grove is barred,
Yet oft the shepherd at dim twilight hour
There roaming, sees Aegeria's chorus shine,
And hears from far with trembling ears the voice
Of gods, and song beyond all mortal thought.

Why should I tell what winged Rumor spreads
Of meagre banquet and poor earthenware
Changed by his presence to a regal feast
On golden tables; or how Death's pale might,
Tamed by his pious prayer, retired, and health
Unhoped for flushed the rosy face? And when
Prophetic horror of impending doom
Assailed them, and at Fate's dark sentences
They trembled, he by untried means was bold
To know the will divine: hence holy shrines
At midnight tingle to the charmed response,
And voices sound amid the lightning flash
Harmless, and radiant gods descend to earth.

And now the work draws to a close, and hearts
Are linked for common ends, and promises
Imperial combine to actual power.
Thence mightiest Rome, mother of law, arose
In day's long past, and overcame the world
By valor. So the old king's heart wins peace,
And heeds the summons, that the gods have freed
Their wearied servant—but across the waves,
Red with the setting sun, and the last couch
Of rosy light, O steadfast soul, for thee
There is a home, and in those happy fields
Forgetfulness of sorrow. There 'tis said
No dust is known, nor sweat in labor vain,
No pain of choking fear, nor weariness
Of hope deferred. Dimly the memories

Of former days rise to their quiet thought;
Time glides unheeded, and with murmur soft
The streams of Ocean breathe eternal peace.
Zephyr's light wing caresses leafy beds
Forever, dewed with Vesper's liquid light.

Nor even will thy fair fame perish here
On earth. While others raise the nameless mass
Of Pyramids, or carve on brazen plates
Their faint inscriptions, whom a little space
In swelling pomp ill-gotten Glory mocked,
Thy memory loving honor keeps alive
Who pitied and relieved our human woes,—
While rocks and streams ennobled by thy song
Shall be, or while an echo yet remains
From Roman lyres, and while old custom draws
To that pure fountain spirits bent with toil,
So long shall thy bright memory remain
Shining in the oblivious night of years.

GOLDWIN SMITH,
E. Coll. Magd.

Oxonii, 1845.

“WHAT IS TRUTH?”

The Tragedy, “What is Truth,” was written to uphold the author’s conviction that the day of the metrical drama has not passed. He was vividly conscious of the poetry which exists in real everyday life, and he frequently declared that the prose drama, not being capable of accentuating this, missed one of the chief beauties of which the drama is capable.

The reader will judge for himself whether or no the author’s contention is vindicated.

The true tragedy of the play will not be understood by those who fail to give ample consideration to the state of mental revolt in which Hargest returns from the East. The author knew full well the unsettling influence which the War has brought to bear on many of the men who were at the front and which is not the least of the evils it entailed.

Bearing about with him the restless discontent which was the aftermath of his acquaintance with scenes of horror and death, it was inevitable that Hargest should feel impelled to try to right what was obviously wrong; should think all others as earnest and honest in the endeavor as himself; should be easily deceived—though warned.

Inevitability springing from character is the essence of tragedy, and in this play the author has undoubtedly succeeded in producing a stirring tragedy.

H. W. D. FRITZ.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

A TRAGEDY, DONE IN BLANK VERSE.

Characters:

John Hargest	-----	Plenipotentiary to the East
Philip Trinsell	-----	Governor of the State of—
Henry Forthright	-----	a Doctor
Dr. Hargest	-----	a Scholar, father of John.
Mary Trinsell	-----	Philip's Wife.
Commandant of Troops	-----	
Walker	-----	} Labor Leaders.
Brown	-----	
Soldiers	-----	
Nurses	-----	

Act I.

*Judge Trinsell's House. Drawing-room. T. reading paper.
Clock chimes seven. Door bell. Forthright ushered in.*

T. Prompt on the hour, Doctor! I had hoped
John would be here before you, for I know
Your hasty business scarce can brook demands
Of private interest. Yet you remember
It was his habit: always in the rear
Of our attending; always on the puff
Arriving, breathed with some quick sidelong matter
Whose readier insistence on his path
Clouded his ultimate purpose. But with him
Almost a virtue, for his ready wit,
Instantly launched to action, could dispose
As incidentals such assaults, and press

Unquenched the main design. Nor has he changed,
Nor men ceased to forgive him; for I hear
How, landed, pledged to address a City Club,
He dallied half an hour behind his time
Persuading some chance talker on the boat
On ocean currents. He who told me this
Smiled as he spoke it, as of what in him
Were passed, that others might not imitate;
His genius carried it.

F. His telegram
Was clear, tonight?

T. Oh, read it! I made sure
Before I called you, that the train he named
Was sharp on schedule.

F. Yes, it smacks of Hargest;
And with that warning he can be depended,
And worth the waiting. I confess, his way,
Impulsive granted, with its freer sweep
Won more than all my jealous discipline
Of wasted moments. He's a higher rank
That needs no sergeant calling left and right.
Such checks are graded to the man, who if
He pass beyond his mentor, guides himself.
These rarer spirits break untrodden trails,
Greater than regulation, and our rules
Are what the average make them.

T. Not so fast;
That would not answer in a court of law,
No single man exempted from the rules
That all men own. Though here with one we love
I'd wink that minor blemish, even he,
Nor three times he, could make it less than fault
To be forgiven, and all faults in all

Must keep within forgiveness. There's a force
In these established judgments far beyond
The pin-pricks of the individual mind.
He never passed in this and other things
As much with me as those who viewed his height
From a greater distance. Many a time I told him
How ill it was that one who could do great
Should botch at little things. He who has scaled
Mont Blanc, should take no harm on College Hill.
What all can do, should not be left undone
From ease of doing. What in itself is good
Demands performance, and to let it slip
Is shame in us, not pettiness in it.
We humored him in this, and in that grace
His laxness, like a wayward boy, grew up
Unruled and headstrong.

F. Headstrong? Come, come, Trinsell,
This is a great storm from a tiny cloud,
You flush and fidget, as if to remember
Rankled old sores, and all this sudden heat
My words could hardly kindle. I know Hargest,
Though you *were* nearer to him, and I know
There is no man more disciplined, and ruled
From anything might shame him. Puff this up,
And you may blink his natural worth, which friendship
Should cling to, not slur over.

T. That I grant,
The truth is [*looks out of window*] there is much
that I have heard
That still you know not, which I think will fall
As far from your approval as from mine.
The unwatched weed, in soil so fertile, thrives
Like summer thistles, and his disposition,
Too well sincere, once grant a thing, will push it
To the extremity of an active will,

Let all the world oppose him. Read that paper—
I dropped it as you came—the second column—
There on the first page,—all the prominence
That space and ink can lend; a chance remark,
No more, but magnified by all his rank,
Fame, force of speech and pertinence to the time
To be as it were a challenge to debate,
Speaking his entrance to the argument
That splits us country-wide, but here, here, here,
More than from sea to sea. And with the sheets
Wet from the linotype, why, here he comes—
A city where blind jealousy and greed
Rage like a tempest on the sea of passion;
Where words that show but that much color in them
Are red as blood or blacker than the pit,
And a “perhaps” will shout “It is, it is!”
To eager ears. And this, his native city
Left twenty years ago, which long has used
His praise for theirs, nor dimmed its far-off lustre
With too close breathing on it—will it fail,
With this advantage known, to get him wound
And tangled in the quarrel? Read it, Forthright;
How far does it commit him, or do I
Read all things in one glass?

F. I trust you do.
Let's see—“I quite agree that if the State
Uses its power to support one side
To a dispute, when it derives from both
And pledged to weigh both equal, in so far
It has betrayed its trust”—a quick retort
Passed in the generous flow of careless talk.
Or even this—“In fact, I deprecate
All use of force, unless in just defence,
Between the money-owners and the mass
Who toil in grime for wages”—

I myself

Repeat the words. Why should an editor,
Pledged to speak fairly, neither more nor less,
Of word and deed, and to the multitude
Who hear not face to face, say: "Thus said Hargest—"
Leap o'er the actual; cull a sentence here
Unrooted; wrench interpretation there
From his own tainted creed; and to the crowd
Whogulp large type, and with gross palate pass
Untasted the close column, blaze his headlines:
"Hargest a radical"—worse, "His attitude
May cause his old friend Trinsell to relax
His stringent order—" thus before he comes
Prejudged and classified beneath a tag,
Whose ranging powers sweep sky-high above
Classification and delimiting,—
I do not like it. Let us be discreet
And govern him to shun this specious snare
Ev'n from a whisper. Let me telephone
My home I am delayed, and when he comes
I'll urge him with you.

T. You confirm my fear.

Enter Mary T.

M] Oh welcome, Doctor. 'Tis an evil time
That brings you here so seldom. I was pushed
Preparing for our visitor tonight,
Which kept me late. I know you will excuse it.
Perhaps you talked the freer.

F. Well, in fact—

T. We were discussing—

M. You seem worried, dear;
So do you, Doctor Forthright. But tonight

We must be gay, and as we can forget
These hateful things. Our guest is almost due.

F. And I must telephone.

M. The 'phone is there
As usual. But you must stay to dinner.
John has a scant four hours here, and goes
To the Capital tonight; you must have time
To see him.

F. Thank you, Mary. It will save
Some precious moments.

[*Exit F., and M. closes door. T. stands, drumming on the table with fingers.*]

M. You might have met him, dear,
Our good friend and old class-mate. Will he not
Expect it?

T. No. He wired he would be met
At the station by his father, and go first
To his own home, then come to us at seven.
But he is late. There is the telegram.
He travels quietly, and might not wish
The governor's car to meet him, and attract
Attention.

M. I am sure he would be pleased
If we had met him.

T. Why are you so sure?
A politician, not a lover, now—
Pardon me, Mary. But indeed, he seems
Wrapped in negotiation, and old friendships
Welcome, but less a part of him. He'll use them,
Like all of us, to push the ends he seeks;
We all are older. Look to find him changed.
'Tis natural.

M. What you said was most unfair.
I have been faithful to you twenty years
In deed and very thought, but Hargest is
Still dear to me: next to you, dear to me.
If he were more I might not tell you so.
You were his best friend. He has been away
Twenty long years. If we are cold to him
He will be cold to us. We must show him
Love to gain love, after his wandering,
Hardships and great success through half our lifetime.
I should despise myself if I did less.

T. He has no better friend than me. Indeed
There were other reasons, which involve him in
The situation here. I was annoyed
And said more than I meant.

Re-enter Forthright.

M. Now that you have
A moment, Doctor, do sit down, and take
A little rest. You must be tired out.
'Tis the best entertainment we can give you,
Though all is yours.

F. Oh, work's its own reward.
Mine's but a mite of Adam's heritage.

[To Trinsell.]

I see my work from day to day, no question
Of this or that, and do it.

M. Oh, but listen!
I hear a car in the drive.

T. [At window] Indeed, it's John.

Exeunt T. and F. M. rings, speaks to servant. Voices.

Re-enter T. and F., with Hargest.

M. John, welcome home!

H. Mary! The twenty years
That laid their hands on us, have left you young!
Not one gray hair nor wrinkle! Look at me
And my frost-nipped moustachios! Even Phil,
Always so dapper, has a touch of it.

F. Well, but the heart and laugh are young enough,
You gray-haired boy! Be sober now, and tell us
What kept you and my dinner.

H. Mary, Phil,
I must crave pardon. Hardly had I reached
The platform, when two purse-lipped delegates
Came with my father, he but half consenting.
Then on our greeting, and while hand in hand
We walked, they opened gates of eloquence
To lure me to a conference at nine—
Some brief address—and reasons good they gave
That ne'er again at such a time and place
Could such an audience meet such a man.
I frowned, but they by most persuasive steps
Kedged up against my will, until I promised,
And come a late guest, who must early leave.

T. But you amaze me past all weighing words!
This city chafes on martial law. This one
Meeting is licensed under guard; the issue
Is wound and twisted in the web of the State,—
No casual theory. What you say here
In four hours, stay, may haunt you through your life,
And more, perhaps. You must not speak to-night
Till this whole cause is known, and seasoned in you.

H. Henry, you look as wroth. Why, my dear friends,
I come arms wide in peace and fellowship,
And find barred visors, lances laid in rest,
Not pleading politics, but my late coming

Here to this glad reunion. Am I one
To leap in booby-traps? But we waste time.
Fear me not, Phil.

M. Oh, do not mix in this!

F. Hargest, do not. The case is far past words.
You were lured into this. Your presence there
May color more than they dare otherwise.

H. But speak with reason! Would I give an hour
Of my brief stay on such a hot request
From mere intrusive vanity? Be sure
I weighed it well, and since the occasion jumped
With my desires, I all in all consented.
I am pledged to hear and speak. There is no more.

T. John, listen to a friend—

H. But, my dear Phil.
Look not so serious—sad—

F. You must look more.

H. Mary, protect me!

M. Would I could from worse.
But, Philip, later you can talk this out.
We cannot hope to influence him thus.
Dear John, we have not heard a word of all
Your wonder-book of coral isles and palms,
Japanese moonlight, and these later years
Of war and delicate intrigues; and this
Shall charm us all at dinner.

H. Mary, thanks!
My last commission to the Orient
You know. Now with a weighty document
And full success, straight from Pekin I come
To the Council, fairest news. True I have seen

Breath-taking beauty in the loveliest corner
Of this broad earth: Hawaian serenades
By the shores of the green Pacific; roved and dreamed
In jewel-isled Tahiti; seen afar
The glittering cone of Fusiyama's snows,
And known strange peoples; and the wondrous things
I hoped in youth. I will tell all, and this
Is easier than argument.

M. Come, all.

Exeunt. Curtain.

The same. Trinsell, Forthright, Hargest.

T. Now, John, forgetting our brief bitterness,
Listen the cause at full, and let this paper
Confirm it. For a month the Brotherhoods,
Striking, have stopped the railroads. Limb by limb,
Its life-blood thinning, the most complex organ
So subtly framed of furnaces and mills,
The sinews of our industry, has felt
The drain, and slowly loosens. On one side
The owners, on the slippery edge of loss,
United to refuse demands that pass
The earnings of their venture; on the other
A clenched resolve, to wrench by banded strength
A fuller means of living, whence it may.
Vainly the State, bringing them face to face,
Seeks compromise. They stand on pinnacles
Opposed,—no common ground. Prompt to the day
Of conference the owners bring their ledgers
To prove their empty chest, and to the dollar
We audit and confirm them. Then they prove
That by experience to increase the rates
Would but reduce the volume of their service,
And balance so their income. Unconvinced

The fiery delegates stamp out in wrath,
Choking with wrong, and tongued to utter it,
And will not parley more. From day to day
Our throbbing life is numbed, and every home
In this broad city feels the bitter pinch
Of idleness and want. All trade is dead.

F. The people starve. The very dogs are dropping.
Underfed children pine. There is no food
For who fall sick; no fire for hospitals;
No lights for streets that swarm with criminals.

T. Imagine more; men standing in close groups
Inflamed by red-eyed orators, and bold
For quick redress; more swayed by cries of rage
Than sober fact, and by their million tongues
More than our half-heard protest. 'Tis the way
Of men at such a time to side with those
Who shriek of wrongs, not those who balance them
Meticulous. Into this raging sea
We summon troops, and by what desperate means,
With guarded trains raw-manned, by steam and road,
Comb in a bare subsistence, to avert
Most dire calamity. The sullen crowds,
Flaming to rage, hedge round our volunteers
Provoking them. As yet no act of conflict
Has fired the mine, but what the future holds
Who knows? I have been toiling night and day
To bend hot wills to some cool moderation,
Last night successful, and ere one day pass
Their leaders treat for peace; but in the mass
The tempest is not stilled. Can you in this
Intrude to whose advantage? Let these threads
Unwind, and do not weight my public cares
Or link my friend with the most reckless men
Who move this strife.

H. Philip, you touch me nearly.
I did not know the quarrel ran so high;
And to the steady hand with which you hold
The rudder to these angry waves, may never
My act oppose its force. But I propose
Support, not undermining; I am given
What you have lacked, the people's ear, to urge
At the peak of the time, the peace you plead in secret;
And my own heart, which rules my hand for good,
Impels me at a different slant to throw
My all of influence, in a set design
For which alone I breathe.

T. No different cause
Can plead in the assembly you attend.
And read here openly how marked you come,
Linked in the general mind with this whole web
Of chilled-steel sentiments, too cold to change.
To base their plea these leaders drag you in
To play a fore-planned part, and but your presence
Is all their need. You of all men must fear
To dip unstained repute in this black stream.

F. But one word more: where violence is planned,
And you now warned of danger, be advised
Your present mission presses you to guard
A prop of public influence, your safety.
How can you hesitate?

H. Now gentlemen,
Since I am firm to go—

F. But he is mad!

T. Not mad, but in delirium; let him speak.

H. Control this petulance, and give me leave
To justify your friendship and concern,
Which seek, I know, to shield me. Do not think

Judgment that flouts your own must then be sprung
From folly, for outside the petty compass
That bounds the single mind, a world of thought
Revolves unknown, and shows perhaps its vales,
Seas, mountains, rivers, lakes, to other eyes,
Which see not ours. Do not condemn me, friends,
Till you have proved me, for a single thought
Is wound about my eyes, and all things else
Appear by glimpses. Have you not been drawn
Into the whirlpools of some giant stream
That drowns out personal care for ease or life;
Swallows ambition; joins to its surging flow
All functions of the body, mind and soul,
Till but one will remains—to yield yourself
Unsparingly disciplined, to proclaim
And win some supreme truth? For so am I,
Deaf to all other urging. I have been,
Three separate times, in war, and from the depths
Of horrors, that to mention chills the blood,
Three times came living. Like a hideous dream
Those years return, and in this peaceful land
Like dreams they seem; but little need the proof
Of absent friends I meet and greet no more,
Or these blue scars and thin rheumatic stabs,
That they are real; nor where upon the long
Pacific slopes, ten million crosses mark
The graves of women's tears and poverty,
Unlightened toil and blighted infancy.
Nor these alone have suffered; all who marched
Bright-eyed with martial airs and colors spread
In the noon-day sun of life, have searched the deeps
Of agony and sorrow, till body and soul
Are scarred alike with infamies of war:
Provoked beyond all physical provision;
Both when the flaming sun corrupts the slain,
And when lame midnight creeps on hands and knees

Her icy course, and through the stolid hours
Men's hearts in stale inaction wilt to dust.
I have endured it all, loathing myself,
Cursing the fate that bound me, with the vow
Sworn grimly to the Eternal God, that once
This present goal attained, till when all hope
Were useless, with the same devoted zeal
I would engage another strife, to name
The authors of the guilt, this side or that,
And fix on them the doom.

T. This is not new.
So speak the few in every war. Ev'n now
A council sits to try that guilt, and by
Its measure, portion vengeance. What has this
Sib with the clique that meets at nine?

F. John, John,
Would it were possible, and to that cry
The world's heart beats. Keep to the faith, and work
What your position may, but to the hour
Guard it undimmed.

H. Henry, this is the hour!
But hear me. Twice oblivious slothfulness
Held and delayed me, till I scorned myself.
Now from this last and greatest, scourged to action,
With grim peace torn from cannon's mouth, I come
Late, with one flaming purpose. Peace is won:
To work remains. Once more the diplomats
Who laid the trains of war; the editors
Who fanned base popular rage; the czars of wealth
Who played with lives for gold, have sat unmoved,
Watching the red blood flow, and piteous waste
Of vainly glorious valor, front to front.
And yet unmoved they sit, victor and vanquished,
Half heeding tales of others' agony

Words fail to mimic, that consumes the soul
Or leaves it gasping, dims the eye, and shakes
The frame with palsy, through the toughest shield
Of matchless courage. But we seek in vain
To limit war too dangerous that a nation
Should venture it, not seeing wars are made
By men, not nations, and projecting more
Terrors for those who fight, but none at all
For those who send to war. Those erring brains
And fallible decisions wove the web.
Shall they then ride unchecked to what new strife
Revenge and pride shall spur them? Or if once
Their human envies and ambitious guile
Have wrecked their charge, shall they again be free,
Most dangerous? If by their quick decree
This horror falls on every man who owns
The blood of diverse parentage, shall but these,
Chosen exempt, the authors of the ill,
Hurl peoples into slaughter, and themselves
Look on unscathed, unblamed, unmoved by war?
Our human heart revolts! Through what long pact
In ages past, when monarchs bickering
Hired absolute wills for glory or for pay
To adventure in their cause, themselves immune,
Buying for fine-spun quarrels ready swords.
This drew, we know; no less our kings of power
Would stretch the custom to this larger time
When boundaries fade, and ocean, earth and air
Merge diverse nations to a common end,
To feed and clothe all men, each linked to all.
No more the trumpets call to war alone
Roistering blades, who chafe at peace, but all
Whose sinews serve to carry steel and bomb
Muster perforce, and in the desperate venture
Perish in speechless torment. No command
By shadow of right has pledged their free assent

Concurrent in the policies that shaped
The form of strife, but while they toiled and slept,
Loved, laughed and wept, their chosen governors
Entwined the threads of fate. Whether in wise
Deliberation, or free recklessness,
Or scheming craft, I care not. Those who spun,
Not those who suffer, are responsible.
Why then immune? The changing body of war
Demands an ampler dress, no outworn cloak
Sufficing. Not as one who shrinks from pain
I speak, nor wince from any form of death
In a just cause. Nor there can any blame
Fall to the leaders who decree the war;
But in the faulty balance of our minds,
Or through our careless ignorance, who dare
Sentence all virtue here, all evil there?
Ever a doubt remains, ever a choice.
Both sides claim justice. But when armies join
In battle, pity enters not. Each man
Is doomed to death by any instrument.
Why spare the chiefs who are the vital heart
Of hostile strength? Can war be merciless
More than it is? If farmers from the plough,
Mechanics from their levers, clerks from desks,
Pay with their lives, much more should those who wield
The fateful wand of choice, the forfeit pay,
On whose heads lies the quarrel. If that fear
Clouded the election, from the coward mass
Leaders would tower when the time demands,
Worthy the trusting, and, if war be just,
Strongly would guide the ship. If less than just,
Fear might accomplish peace. Such rude account,
Till all men join in mutual consent
To curb the menace, may deliver us
From crimes of reckless ruling.

T. Mad, mad, mad!
Rash, vengeful, and impossible! I see,
Hargest, the wars have wrecked you. Such a craze
Blasts us in hopeless ruin. One more spark
Flashed in the powder-heap; and now the clock
Stands near to nine. I say you shall not go.

H. You see all speech is vain within the means
Now open for redress. In this ripe cause
I intervene unbiased, to accept
This offered mediation, which both aids
Your wish, and seats me in the popular will,
Whence I shall draw my power. I shall rule
My tongue, be sure, and listen more than speak.
For now, farewell.

F. John, with a heavy heart
I say, farewell, and prosper! For myself
You half convince me; but my life is cast
In different mould, and I can neither dare
To follow nor condemn you. But remember
We are your friends. Philip, shake hands with him;
A man sincere, but fixed beyond all change.

T. Hargest, one last appeal, for boyhood's sake,
To save our friendship.

H. Phil, you know it useless.

[Clock strikes]

The hour strikes! Let not this breach divide
Our sympathies. Here is my hand, and judge me
By these words from my heart. Henry, good-bye.

Enter Mary. Trinsell moves to window.

Yes, Mary, I must go. But do not fear
Any rash deed from me. I think with you
In this dispute, and other cares compel
My entrance. Pardon this uncouth debate

Which broke into our evening. It is a cross
Of public life. Good-bye, and wish me well.

M. Oh, John, I do; but I can hardly speak
From some strange dread of evil things to come,
That makes my heart beat wildly.

H. I must go.

Exit Hargest. Trinsell does not move. Mary goes beside him to the window and waves.

Curtain.

ACT II.

*Committee room off Conference Hall. Window at rear opens
on balcony overlooking street.*

Walker, Brown, Hargest.

W. Brown, you will rue this night! Did I not say
He was against us? Will you listen now?
Sir, thank our courtesy that let you speak
While better men were silent. You have shown
Your colors now, and we have learned our lesson
In time to curb you.

B. Walker, hold your tongue.
This gentleman has spoken every word
With my applause, and I myself have used
These arguments for reason, since we first
Took vote to strike; you see, sir, in the face
Of what resistance. I will not deceive you.
We are divided; these rash blusterers,
Mouthing to move the crowd, would force the play,
And by outranting rule; while we who seek
Deliberation and fair compromise,
Yielding to reason, labor out of breath
From grappling with them. But be well assured

They turn to us in trouble. What they gain
Is from our counsel; what they lose, from blows.

W. You are a traitor, Brown.

B. Leave me alone
To manage this. Here, Mr. Hargest, read
The terms we have approved. [*aside, H. watching them
sharply under his brows*]

Leave me alone—
The fool—I'll clip his wings. [*a loud*] Are these not moderate?

H. They are not, Brown. They leap the very walls
Of opposition, and the Governor
Long since refused them. You demand a fee
Wrung from the general purse, beyond the means
Earned from your industry, for it is proved
To open judgment, that you have in hand
A more than just proportion of the gains
Won by the railroads in their public service.
I speak unprejudiced. The only source
Whence you may profit, is the general purse
Which all who work sustain. Each in his place
Feels equal pinch with you; each is controlled
In his reward, and total of employment,
By what of work the nation's need demands.
Goods must be carried, passengers be sped;
No less must all of us be fed and clothed,
Sheltered in houses; given Church and School;
Governed, and ruled by law, and after toil
In lighter hours beguiled; but all in measure,
Fixed in proportion to the public need.
Each interest can but share in fair degree
For who combine to earn, its recompense.

W. But if the total is too small to give
All men the ton of coal and crust of bread
Their honest work deserves, do you propose

That they shall toil, and see their children starve,
And women dear to us as yours to you
Shiver beneath their shawls? Though all the world
Should crouch beneath it, I will see myself
Shot in the streets before I bend to it.

[*uproar outside*]

B. The case is not so desperate as that,
Nor do we think it so. Be quiet, Walker.
[*aside*] Leave me alone, and let him talk; we have him!

H. These are the reasons that the Governor
Refused you, in strict justice. The hard facts
Of life itself support him. All the world
Can never live in palaces, nor drink
From golden cups, nor load themselves with fur.
All soldiers are not generals. The mass
Must work and singly struggle up to good,
Performing well their daily task; content
To stretch their earned reward to the prime needs
Of health and strength, and discipline their hours
Of leisure to advance them; so to rise
By merit where they will. If you disdain
The iron laws of Nature, and refuse
The fixed rewards the nation's need bestows,
To amplify yourselves, the nation's arm
Must force you to accept them.

W. Though we starve?
Is there a God in Heaven?

H. Over all
A great God rules and pities, but is firm.
Here are your papers; they will be refused.
You must believe it, Brown.

B. And, if they are,
Will you not help us with him?

H. No, I cannot.

W. Brown, that's enough. A question and an answer.

B. Sir, when we asked you where your sympathies Lay in this matter, you answered, "With the starving"—

H. They do.

B. Well, let that pass. But, for the man Who brings a settlement with bread and fire And honour saved, there will be built a throne Within the hearts and memories of these, To shame old loyalties. There is no place Within their ballot's gift, beyond his hope. Does such stir your desire?

H. It brought me here.

B. Then let us talk. Where do you meet with us?

H. Walker, let me convince you. I have shown, (Proved to exclusion at your Conference), Why your demand were banned. Do you agree Those reasons stand?

W. While children beg for bread I will agree to nothing.

H. Can you hope For better, while in obstinate seclusion You shun the light of truth? But this is idle. I know your cause is lost: that you yourselves, Swallowing base pride, meet with the Governor Tomorrow, that this suffering may end. You will find a willing ear; and from that hour I pledge myself, by every means I own To move instant relief for this distress.

[*Confused noise outside*]

B. If we surrender, and a Council meets,

Equal of us and theirs, to try our cause,
What hope have we of justice? The scales are weighed
With hidden gold.

H. Go on.

[*Walker moves to go*]

B. Wait, Walker, wait!
Then, if that Council meets, will you appear
For us, a delegate, to guard the table
From secret whispers?

H. What authority
Have I to represent you? Give me power
Sufficient to secure me in the right
To speak for you, and these three things I promise—
Immunity for all; relief to need,
With grants to bridge the interval till work
Has salved your wounds; and at the Conference
What best terms may be won. With all my powers
I bind me to deserve the confidence
That you must give me.

W. Sir, it is most fair.
I do not doubt your word, and on that promise
I give you faith and hand.

H. And I esteem them
Those of an honest man.

B. I also join
To accept most heartily, and give the powers
Great as you ask.

H. Let me have half an hour
To settle with myself.

B. We will at once—
If we can break this crowd, which fills the street
Shoulder to shoulder wedged—at our headquarters,

Until your coming, with the full committee
Discuss this mission; who I think forthwith
Will grant approval; and with due assurance
Invest you.

W. Mr. Hargest, you will come?

H. Be sure I shall, before your meeting rises,
And hands all round upon this friendly pact.

Exeunt W. and B.

H. From thought to action; glibly on the tongue,
But slow from brain to hand, the great transition.
The hand not slow to act, nor unequipped;
But from the boisterous and consuming strife,
Once launched, no disengaging; and the brain
Prolongs exertion, to delay the act.
Vain thing; by every treasured memory
Of worthy deed, other's or mine, a life's
Accumulation of example, all
My natural impulse ere it mingle in
The stream of later cautions and delays,
Relentless fingers point me: here the choice
And there the course of action. Weigh the terms,
And with what needed pause, complete regard
To what best fits integrity, tolerance,
And faith in ultimate good, securely grasp
The choice. Thence to the deed, the least delay
Is base evasion; not to act, is breach
Of obligation to the powers that gave
Impelling speech, commanding presence, all
My gifts of nature, which a firmer soul
Might use more nobly. Nor am I so cold
Not to delight in them, and, with the thought,
Preserve them. In this world of food and drink
It matters not behind these rounding walls
What phantoms dance; but from the responsive tongue

What words to fire men's blood, and from the hand
Deeds in the teeth of Fate. Thought is confined
Within the single mind; we live by touch
And rub with all the world, and in our deeds,
Not thoughts, our current value. Thought alone,
Like lust, consumes its feeder; unsustained
By some substantial functioning, these airs
And vapors waste away, and all the powers
That issued them, lose body, and become
The glittering sparkle of a waterfall
Poured from its solid course, in wreaths of mist
Dewing the air; but let them reunite
And with thrice-tripled might they foam along
Resistless. Then to lose these powers, or sweep
Renewed to find them greater. 'Twixt the two
I stand, two ways impelled, one way by strength,
One, weakness. All past failures cry on me.
I will not hesitate, nor coward pause
Debating, when the choice is evident.
What in my mind is firm, shall to the deed
Pass like electric current. Dare I think,
And dare not act? Such hesitance is sham;
Deliberation here a self-raised screen
To my own judgment. 'Tis the golden time,
The summit of my climbing. On this wave
I am rolled to the height of influence and renown,
And from the continuous rise of these late years
Where no such beacons flamed, but petty sparks
Fanned up by daring, at this peak of hope,
Although its greatness daunt me, no less bold,
A supreme culmination, I shall leap
To solid ground, and see my life fulfilled.

Enter Dr. Hargest.

Dr. H. What, John, alone? I feared—I feared—no matter,
I do not trust your friends.

H. Not Brown, for all
The gold in China; I have read him through.
But I must tell you—would the announcement fell
With your approval—that I have become
An actor in this drama.

H. I am warned of it.
Believe me, father, I have conned the chance
Before it offered, and to gain the end
That you know well, am loosening a rose
From out its thorns, the gain well worth the risk.

Dr. H. Well, it may be. What rash and headlong youth!
And all for what? Place, fame, the crowd's applause?
You are above them. What then—to attain
This boon for its own sake? Ah, boy, boy, boy,
All you have known and seen can teach you less
Than the long, even years, one after one,
That fill my age. Are no wars fought but on
The smoking field?—while in the vast above
Spheres crash and hurtle; bombarding meteors waste
To atoms in our atmosphere and fall;
And all of us: men, women, suckling babes,
Feast on the slaughtered flesh of other life
Reserved by force for food? It is the law
Which life exists by. You will say, "No matter:
No suffering attends"—blind to the pace
Of plodding logic. For, if life be war,
Man not exempt, then with what instruments
Intelligence competing builds itself
War must be fought. But, to be more direct,
What is this life that you should seek to shield it?

A little space we grope, darkness behind,
Darkness before. Now as the shadows gather
I look along the past: I see myself,
Ardently hastening on the unknown road—
Mercifully unknown—a world all new,
Move through its destined stages, blind to doubt;
Beget new life; watch proudly over you;
Foster your ripening powers; see their prime.
With that your eyes are turned from me: you feel
The longings I had felt, those eager hopes.
You loved; you dreamed your dreams of cherishing
Another life. I found myself alone,
My child a man, treading his father's path
Strong in himself; but with my pride in you
My hopes dissolved. There but remained to pass
Declining years of joys and sorrows; so
To leave the field to younger arms, and die.
Experience broadened in me, but my years
Grew shorter. Age subdued me. To what end
These hopes and striving? That a second heart
Should feel the same and wither in its turn?
What goal to the procession? Like a dream
My ardor faded. I was rich in store
Of human thought, but in my inner self
I knew the same powers and weaknesses
That fought for souls ten thousand years ago.
The body changes, but the heart is poured
In moulds of granite. With no alteration,
Except in keener anguish, life assumes
Its forms successive, and the conscious mind
Perceives itself in wonder, as the thrall
Of changeless power, blooming ever new,
Replacing like with like. What happiness
If greater numbers tread the fruitless mill?
All men have died; no less must we. Though all
The mystery of the world were solved: the tides,

The forms of matter, light, the waves of sound,
The electric strain and stress in ether, still
The future stares inscrutable, and still
We breed and die. This is the vast despair
That swallows up all other. Were we made
Like the dumb ox, to feel no discontent,
No grief would touch us; but the very powers
By which we rule them, bring us suffering
They cannot know. There is no comfort, John,
In these vain gropings to procure a spark
Under the canopy of endless night.
Vain, vain, and to no end.

H. Yes, vain indeed
The useless round. But while the active warmth
Of hope, love, pity, animates my frame
I must obey. Not seeing why, I move
Instinctive to the stirring of the blood,
And hope for good to follow. Ever more
Doubts crowd on me. I do not dare to heed them.
Oh, drown reflection! If I ask myself
My own desires, they baffle me. I say
I scorn ambition, glory, wealth and ease;
But the betrayal of my secret thoughts
Accuses me. I cannot rule my heart.
I do not know myself. I who disdain
All dress of rank, and as an equal meet
Each thinking man, holding the higher place
But greater obligation—not in hope
Of praise, but to be worthy—even I
Spin from the inner world that rules my sleep
Incongruous opposites: ambitious dreams
Which when awake I laugh at; when I ride
Through crowds that shout applause, and with a nod
Given or withheld, repay old gratitudes
Or spites too small to name or think upon;—

A million dreams and fancies; such thin stuff
As boys disguise their present with. And yet
My blood can warm to impulse, and I feel
The call to generous acts. A natural force
Sustains me, and I dare not question it.
I move by instinct to my destiny.

Dr. H. It may be, it may be; I will not keep you.
Oh, guard that impulse, John! It is more worth
Than all things else that time can bring! For now,
A little while, farewell! Do nothing rash!
Beware of Brown; he means no good.

H.

Farewell.

Exit Hargest.

Dr. H. Unheeded like a derelict on the sand
I, once a man of men! Oh, Time, Time, Time,
Destroy me altogether! I have lived
Too long. My books are wearisome, and life
Is curious no more to a tired brain
That has seen too much. I have lived my active time
And it is gone. These changes weary me.
Life comes and goes, and it is wonderful.
But I have ceased to wonder. Few more years
I stand upon the shore, where my own craft
Is drawn up dry forever. To my age
There but remains a smile to see the ships,
Launched gay with hope and youth, put out to sea,
Built staunch, unused to weather, soon to be
Warped on the untamed tide, stained with the brine,
Or dashed to pieces on the rocky fangs
By turbulent gales, or drawn up dry like mine,
Never again to sail, never again.
A moving scene, this life; but to what end?
Oh, to what end? Let be. The broad seas roll,
The planets sweep majestic. All things pass

Their destined cycle, and all living flesh
Disdains the writhing of the fettered mind,
Which by some accident thus knows itself
In useless doubts, repinings, questionings.
It is another world from that which deals
With birth and death, and years whose every day
Brings sleep and waking, exercise and food.

(*shouts outside*)

What is that noise? It tingles in the air
Like opened gates on chaos. John is there.

(*machine gun fires*)

They fire (*rushes to window*)
Oh God in Heaven! He is slain!

Curtain.

Act III.

Trinsell's Study. *Trinsell at desk.* *Commandant of troops*

T. I heard the firing. Haste is in your eyes.
What is it? Speak.

C. John Hargest has been taken,
Leading the rabble on our barricades.
They were repulsed at once, but by compulsion,
With heavy loss.

T. Oh Hargest, Hargest! Sir,
It is impossible that he should lead them.
Make your report.

C. Outside the Labor Hall,
You know, a company of infantry
Was posted with machine-guns to command
The street. At flanking corners two platoons
Were detailed as a cordon to withhold

All comers at a distance. Through the files,
Watched by their leaders, the procession passed
To fill the hall, unarmed, without a murmur.
I stood myself beside the door. By nine
All were within. Late, at the quarter hour,
The leaders came, and with them whom we know
To be John Hargest, in such company
Hard to believe. I spoke to him. He answered
That as a delegate but newly pledged
In the interests of peace he came to speak,
A leader of the Conference. They entered.
My troops are scattered on a hundred quests
Throughout the city. I to my central post,
This danger past, as to the greatest need,
Went in due course. I heard by telephone
All that succeeded. Prompt on ten o'clock
The crowd had left the Hall, and with some clamor
Passed through our guard, and as it seemed, dispersed.
My troops withdrew. The regular patrols
Resumed their vigilance. Their first report
Told of a gathering mob, that to this street
Returned, with menacing demonstration blocked
Their progress. Instantly with all reserves
I hastened to the spot. I found the crowd
In thousands, armed and shouting; our patrol
Helpless before their numbers. Seeing us
The mob pressed back, but in their sluggish rear
The noise increased ten-fold. Walker and Brown,
Their leaders, from the neighboring headquarters
Rushed out to me, imploring time to send
All home in peace. That instant, from the Hall
Descending, Hargest came; and with a shout
As prearranged, of "Hargest! Hargest!" all
The crowd resounded, and a dozen shots,
Ill-aimed from haste and darkness, whistled by.
Brown fled aside. Walker into the crowd

Rushed wildly. Rifles levelled, overhead
We fired. The rabble surged against the mass
Behind them. Some fell prone. Some on each side
Through broken doors and windows fled. The rear
Shouted no less for Hargest, and pressed on
As those in front gave way, till he himself
Came breasting through the crowd, whereat their shouts
Grew fiercer, and again their shots rang out
From street and window, with a furious hail
Of stones snatched from the streets. Into the mass
We fired, and, bayonets levelled, charged. They fled
Trampling each other. Soon the street was cleared.
No other shot was fired. We searched the houses,
But all had fled. We gathered prisoner
All found with arms. Four men lay dead. A score
Were wounded, and are now in hospital.
Walker is dead. Hargest is prisoner.
I spoke to him, but from his stretcher he,
With head erect, and eyes that full of wrath
Opened their flame on me, made no reply.
He stands without a plea, the cause direct
Of this dire conflict, and by martial law
That but awaits your sanction—some brief form
Of drum-head martial court—condemned to die.

T. Too much to bear! Leave me, and take such steps
As may secure tomorrow's peace.

C. The captured?

T. Wait till tomorrow! Leave me! Till tomorrow!

Exit Commandant.

Enter Mary.

M. Philip, I heard. Oh, this is past belief! What has he done to them? Such wickedness! But you can save him. We must go to him.

How can you shake your head? Why Philip, Philip,
He is guiltless,—hurt,—in prison—

T. This must wait.

I am not his friend alone, but Governor
Of this great State, and with no prejudice
Must weigh the public interest, were I
Myself to fall by it, or all of mine.
I have not heard he is severely hurt.
There is much to think of. I must weigh it well.

M. Philip, I cannot live until I know
You feel John freed from blame in this, betrayed
By faith and vision into wicked hands.
Why do you frown and wrestle with yourself?
It wrings my heart. There is no doubt. You know—
I know—God knows—he had no hand in it.
Is he your enemy: one to be doomed
By clouding up the truth? That would be base,
Even with one you hated; but not he:
Not John, our childhood friend, staunch, proved and worthy;
No quarrel till this night, and I am sure
No cause to stain his honor. Answer me—
There was no cause?

T. Nothing to his dishonor,
Yet an offence.

M. I do not care for words.
He is your friend. The worst offence is yours:
Shameful dishonor, not to be forgiven,
To leave a friend, and such a friend—a man
Whom good men honor—under mere suspicion
You knew unmerited. I do not know you.
This is not like you, Philip. You are just;—
You have been. You are steadfast to condemn
Wrong-doing, but inflexible to urge
Fair hearing in defense. I loved you for it.

If that were justice, to defend a man
To the last breath, stained with the blackest crimes
Which, charged at first, proved true, then this is plain,
A thousand times compelling, to defend
The innocent from a known wrong. Oh Philip,
This is some wretched dream!

T. Be quiet, Mary.
Justice is not so simple here. His fault
Does not dishonor him. All you have said
Is in my mind; but when a trusted name
Rings thus in all men's ears, the single man
Expands into a myth, not what he is
But what men think him; and thereby his deeds
Are magnified as well, for good or evil,
Not to be judged alone, but by the effect.
Virtues of common men may be his crimes.
In brief, I must consider this alone,
Stripped of emotion.

M. These are only words;
And yet I trust you, Philip, though you choose
To barricade your doubts from my advice.
You are too distant with me. Life is more
Than a parade of shadows on a wall
To count and index by the outward shape;
Friends are more real than figments of the brain.
Dearest, be just to him.

T. Yes, just to him.
A judge is not a man, but a machine
Poised in a vacuum of human warmth
To balance good and evil, though the heart
Recoils. This fading night is all too short
To hold my heavy task.

M.

I will call Harry.

He may have news of John.

Exit Mary.

T.

In all its breadth

Review the problem. O, that I could feel

Above me the dominion of the Law,

By its received decisions guiding me,

Myself to it accountable for lapse,

Merely the voice of pitiless decree!

But here its studious diligence is vain.

Its nature, then? The steadfast heart of Law?

Its theory and essence, large enough

To combine all human deeds? In this rough world

Of jostling zeal and individual needs

To hold for all men justice. What is justice?

What is the portioning of law? Revenge?

Judaic vengeance, which by tooth and eye

Repeats the first offence? It is to miss

The shades and tones of motive—to deny

That human wisdom in this treacherous footing

Can sift the good and evil—to prolong

The passion punished. Then no vengeful wrath

Is in the heart of justice, save what clings

To blundering human hands. Then like reward?

He who takes life must lose his own—all wrong

Claims equal retribution? Grant all life

Equal in value,—a sublime presumption—

What for the man who by such subtle channels

Mines at the roots of our developed state?

For him, prevention. This vast edifice,

Built stone by stone through rolling centuries,

Is not a toy to hazard in an hour.

Between extremes the even mind of man

Climbs step by step, and by its common sense

Rejects the dangerous. To every man

Freedom and happiness—to none be given
Encroachment on another's good. Who dares
Shall with least wrathful haste be circumscribed;
Prevention by persuasion; failing this
Incarceration or last penalty.
But firmness for example; that the heart
Too dull for kindness, may by proof believe
And dread the hand of law. Prevention, then,
And wise deterrent. All that breathes of wrath
And retributive vengeance in its act
The accident of human application.
But throned beyond all definition rules
A self-sufficient essence, deity,—
Justice—a divine balance, harmony;
Not different from what the poets feign
A complete goddess, balancing her scales;
Not judging by the eye alone, but all
The antecedent causes measuring.
As her own scales in equilibrium,
Not weight alone, but distance from the centre—
So not the crime alone, but what its motive—
Determines. For beyond our vision all
That hideous seems to men brought up in ease:
Unhallowed crimes, distorted energies:
Those thick-scummed waters where the stream of life
Chokes and exhales corruption, may but seem
Nightmares and foul abortions of a soul
Stubborned by manhood and adversity,
All softer strains consumed in the acid drench
Of wrongs endured and hidden in the heart,
Ages of suffering, ignorance, disease;
All wrongs external: to the eyes of God
A Cross as heavy as the Master's own,
Though blindly carried, moving pity not blame.
Passions that seem through some degenerate soul
To reflect the inky belchings of the Pit

May there transmute to inborn wrongs of one
That free as Nature's air would live and grow
Released from his inheritance of ill.
Vain thought, which clouds the glass of present deeds!
No profit here; these at the feet of God
Must sue for grace, but in our courts despair.
All these the mercy of God may comprehend,
Who, knowing all, and balancing, forgives.
That arbitration weighs the souls of men:
Here in this mortal world, their heavy deeds
Loom all too real in power for good or evil,
And cry for regulation. In our world
As men seem, so they are, and to their acts
Must their reward be measured. Let this stand!
Now to the problem bend me—my own mind
His only court; judge, advocate, accuser.
Wherein he stands condemned, this Fiery Cross
Of twisted doctrine, which to blanket up
Impels his summoning, demands my silence,
And in the close-locked chambers of my soul
Decision, where my nearest knocks in vain.—
Her faith in him, so quick, so warm, so sure
That for a friend faces a husband down,—
Preserve me from such thoughts! My friend—my rival,
Who at the peak of my hard-won success
Comes with his easy graces to dispute
My sphere of domination. What is this?
Such slants of thoughts my master? Dare I judge
In jealous prejudice? To such attacks
Lean rather to the other side, to hold
Him guiltless prepossessed; or sink them quite.
What are such whimsies to the sovereign mind?
Cranks of the spirit: impish elves, that tease,
Not rule, the soul. Whether with joy or pain
I view it, straight and plain before me lies
The single path of justice, where no choice

Of easy ways in rounding to the goal
Relaxes care; there is no other; all
The tracks and byways set to entice the weak
Wind through unhallowed ground. Then coldness, courage
Must lead me where no earlier foot has trod.
Were it but cleaving through some natural bond,
The challenged will, to prove her domination,
Would lift her sovereign rod. O Firmness, stand,
And put to flight this aimless wavering!
His twisted doctrine; therein lies the guilt.
For from the named offence his hands are clear,
Most nobly innocent. He braved the crowd
Amazed and fearless in the sudden danger
To quench the flame, and in the subtle plot
Was snared. It must be so. But there remains
The pent volcano of his energy
Yet smoldering to eruption. To his lips,
Now as their martyr held, the mob will lay
Ears doubly faithful. Busked with a show of truth
To hide the deadly steel, like greedy fish
Theygulp the bait. But whether false or true
Such words have eagle's wings for tireless flight
From ear to ear, to whisper fear and hate,
Distrust and envy, passion and revenge.
The strength of States is lost. The nameless mass
On whom the towers rest, whose every stone
Is strength or weakness in the whole, is shaken,—
An uncemented edifice. They toil
Each for himself, envious of him above,
Ruthless to him beneath. Disdain or rage
For what should be their glory: governors
Temperate and firm, sunlight of art, the hours
Of studious patience, which for future years
Makes all their toil illustrious, come between
Union for noble ends. Though each depends
On all, each turns to his own selfish pleasure,

Indulgence, fickle vanity or whim
His sum of effort. Merit is obscured,
Genius goes begging; while the common-place,
Secure in numbers and complacency,
Repeats itself unchanging. Those above it,
Perplexed, it hates, and wishes to destroy.
But by their toil it lives. Between the two
Who dares sow discord more? For now supreme
The crowd delights its fancy, quick to change,
Relentless in its passion; slow to build,
Quick to destroy; implicit to believe
Promptings of rage, dull to the voice of reason.
So this of Hargest's, counselling revenge,
Bloody incitement to all desperate deeds,
Will fire the trains of passion; burst the bonds
Of cool deliberation, and assail
The props of Government; but were it held
From public urging, the unthinking crowd
Will travel safer paths in peace. But Hargest
With iron will and too persuasive words,
All fire and boldness, in this evil cause
Is sworn. It cannot rest while he is free.
But to condemn him? Though it be prevention
Of ungauged evils, yet that even Justice,
Whose voice we hear instinctive, bids me stay.
Nor with the Law can I proceed, to sentence
In foreign cause, and that but feared, whose fairness
With scrupulous care of wrong will not permit
Tomorrow's law to touch today's offence.
So great ability—but, if distorted,
So much the greater harm. And though in honor
He has proceeded in no bad intent,
Yet when a leader leads astray, to draw
His followers to ruin and despair,
Unpitied he must fall, though undishonored.
But that his name should bear eternal shame?

His or the nation's woe. It is not I
Who put this wrong on him. His mind was warped
Under the strains of war; there lay the blame.
These evils follow: endless horrors of war.
Some fall upon the field; some bear the scars
Within the heart, and meet a later fate.
War kills by bullets or disease of soul;
The quicker doom is better. All is war.
Almighty God, wise, just and merciful,
Thou seest my tortured heart! Be witness for me
The fever of my blood; this icy sweat!
The rigor of the Law shall take its course!

Curtain.

ACT IV.

Hospital. Beds rear stage. Hargest brought in on stretcher, four soldiers carrying him. Placed on bed in front stage.

Forthright. Nurses.

F. Step softly, softly. Take this blanket here,
You, there. Now lift him. Lay him on the bed.
Now raise his shoulders. Draw the blanket out.
Now free the hips—so. Are you easy, John?

H. Quite easy, Harry.

F. Who attended him?
These bandages are well.

Soldier. I put them on
As he directed.

H. Not for the first time,
As you know, Harry, but the last time now.

F. Well, say no more. Let's see the wound.

[removing bandages]

M'm, m'm,

Little blood. At what distance were you hit?

H. A hundred feet.

F. So much? Is the bullet out?

H. No. Speak out. Harry. I have but an hour.
I know it. From these punctured tubes my blood
Like sands of time is running.

F. Running fast.
The heart is laboring. Fractures. Gaping lungs.
Internal hemorrhage. But a little while.
An hour or two. I have called your father. Phil
And Mary will be here. Do not talk much.
You understand me, John. These others need me.

Enter Dr. Hargest.

Here comes your father. [To Dr. H.]

Do not talk too much.

There is no hope. He is very weak.

[moves to rear stage]

H. Dear father—

Dr. H. Hush, hush, you must not speak. My boy, my boy!
Oh God have pity! All the fortitude
Of books dissolves in tears. My boy, my pride!
Do not regard me, John;

[takes his hand, sits at right]

I will sit here

Without a word, so that you need not speak.

H. Father, forgive me. All your love and hope
Lie bleeding here with me. I should not thus
Have risked them with my life.

Dr. H. No thought of that,—
None of reproach—beyond fear and beyond
Reproach. Be tranquil. No more words. Lie still.

Enter Mary and Trinsell. Mary hurries to Hargest, kneels beside him, takes his hand. Trinsell talks to nurse.

H. I am dying, Mary.

M. Oh, this breaks my heart!
[looks at Dr. Hargest, places hand over his]
I knew it from the first. Did you not see—
Oh John, I loved you; but you would not wait;
You would not trust me. Then it was too late.
You were away—I was too proud—a girl—

H. Mary! Oh, speech is idle now. No more.
But I am happy.

M. [going to Trinsell] Philip, speak to him.
You are so cold, I fear you.

T. [to nurse] Then no hope?
John, I have not a word. We are apart.
How I respect you, but my own heart knows.
Can you believe me? That this had not been
I would give my life. But it is vain to say it.
I will not play the hypocrite. Ev'n here—
Here most of all, where the stark facts of life
Stare grimly at us, I must be sincere.
You taste the fruits of a mistaken zeal,
But in this evil greater griefs are spared.

Dr. H. Philip, this is too much.

M. Oh cruel, cruel!

H. Not one whit, but a firm and honest voice
In tune with honor, Philip. Such from you—

Nurse. You must not speak.

H. 'Tis all that's left to me,
But I have much to say. You will not stop me.
Better unload my thought than lie an hour
Struggling in pain for breath.

Why should you change?

A coward weakness, to abate one jot
Though all the world crash round you. Nor do I.
Are we divided, then? Well, let it be.
You to your thought, I mine. But I am dead;
And by our friendship we unite above
The gulf between us, living. As a man
Honest and to be loved, firm to his word,
I hold you worthy. Here and here alone
In honor we can meet, and join our hands
In perfect understanding.

T. Be it so. [they shake hands]
You are above me, John, but you and I
Are one in heart.

H. I am the weaker man.
I am too fiery, too impatient. Life
Moves slowly up to better things. What then?
Excessive eagerness may lose itself
But cannot waste to nothing, like a seed
Thrown to the winds, which somewhere will take root
And bring forth better fruit. I am content.
I'm living, such a man. I felt myself
Able, alert, human as other men,
But something of a different cast in me
That throws me opposite the stream of life,
A laggard or a dreamer. I don't know.
It's better this way. Let me die. At worst
I'm rid of many troubles of decision,
Vain strifes with littleness, perverse ambitions,
Too little hope of final happiness
To make it worth the living. If my fate

Decreed a longer struggle, I would show
Unweakened resolution, to pursue
Unchanged conviction. But, no fault of mine,
Thrown on the crags of other men's dislike,
My wearied craft need sail no more, nor I
Beat longer 'gainst the wind. Life held for me
No settled place, with wife and children's love
To make one spot of earth more dear than all.
I roamed with alien men in distant lands,
And on this glimpse of home must close my eyes;
Last of my race: a single branch; the trunk
Soon after me to fall. Such soaring hopes
Tumbling with broken wings. Too late to mourn,
Late to repent. But it was fixed in Fate—
Inevitable doom for a cause that lacked
Honest support of worthier men than I.

T. No, John, none worthier.

H. Better fitted men
To gauge opinion, hold and model it.

[*Forthright comes to front*]

F. What is this talking? John, like still and rest.

[*feels pulse and heart*]

Pause.

H. A hundred fathom deep, clear as a crystal!
It is very beautiful.

F. He's wandering.
He may not speak again in reason, but
Pass out in dreaming.

[*gives stimulant*]

Philip, you were right,
All in the right, and our poor lad was wrong.
He has paid the price.

T. No, Henry, no; I know not;
Such rankling doubts in me, and keen remorse
That rack my secret heart. No more of peace,
But more of tolerance, please God, henceforth.

F. I can do nothing for him. He is dying.

Pause. Trinsell opens window.

T. The air is stifling here. The early sun
Is peeping red and glaring; but *his* sun
Is in the western hills—O, Henry, come!

H. What's that I hear?—the church-bell ringing?
Cover me up—It must be almost night.
I'm tired—Ah!—It's getting very dark—[dies]

F. He has gone. Go, Philip, and take Mary with you,
And see the old man home.

Exit Trinsell, with Mary and Dr. Hargest.

Two of you, order

An ambulance, and to his father's house
Carry him gently. I have no time for grief.
A great man gone—but it's a bitter world,
And work at least is real. The man who gives
Too much to mere abstractions is condemned
To die for shadows. Mind's a subtle thing,
And runs away with us. But I've no time
To think this out. Take up the body. Come.

[Hargest is carried out]

Curtain.

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